



Prairie Provinces Collection

S. Evangeline Warren

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1961

SEVENTY SOUTH ALBERTA YEARS

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The autobiography of
ERNEST HERBERT FALKLAND (BERT) WARREN
as written by
S. EVANGELINE WARREN

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" AN OLD-TIMER "

by J. F. Hamilton

" I'm an old-timer,
Came when the country was new;
When never a city or hamlet
Clouded or brightened the view.
Before the smoke of the train,
When only the speed of the saddle
Matched the miles of the plain.
Before any roads had been graded
The trails just wiggled along;
The country was open and boundless,
Inviting the daring and strong.
The journeys were too long for a wagon,
The fields were too big for a plow,
The plains were made for the rancher,
The rider, the horse, and the cow.
Before any bridges were builded
O'er these rivers rapid and free
That hurry down from the mountains,
Across the plains to the sea,
These rivers I've forded a-plenty
Though swollen and muddy the flow . . .

Gone are the mates of my saddle,
A toll of time and of change;
Gone is that spirit of freedom
That rode with us there on the range . . . "

INTRODUCTION

I WONDER, DEAR reader, if you can picture in your mind's eye my world of yesterday? Probably not, unless you too have seen your "seven times ten." My world of yesterday was Southern Alberta; a land wild and untamed, stretching away to far horizons the city-dweller and the Easterner could never have known.

I have always thought of myself as living more or less in the back country of the great Canadian West. Now it comes as a surprise that is almost shock, just trying to realise how great are the changes of the last seventy years! You may have heard a fairly new jingle that tells how the railway comes through the middle of the house, comes and goes through the middle of the house. And that was the thought that echoed through my mind when the new Provincial Highway, No. 36, cut right through the middle of my front yard, blotting out gardens, borders, and shade trees, thus leaving me with little more privacy than a goldfish.

My grandparents and parents were pioneers of the West in the truest sense of the word. They had grown up and lived in the centres of old world civilisation. For various reasons they had come to Canada—a land of vast and frightening distances. And in the prairie West a wilderness unknown and untilled. This was the land I knew in my earliest childhood. And this province of Alberta could well have been described as the "back of beyond" when I was born on August 19th, 1888, in a little slab shack in a little mining town called Lethbridge. This name was a promotion from its first humble label of Coalbanks.

The grassy acres in this far south-western part of the wide-spreading North-West Territories hardly knew farmyard or plough, for it was the hey-day of the ranching industry. It was the day of the big ranch and the wide-open range; the day of the

sprawling ranch-house and uncounted busy corrals. It was the day of numberless winding trails over the grassy plains, and of seemingly endless herds of cattle travelling on foot, urged along by their cowboy guardians. It was the day of the stage-coach and the bull-teams, and the freight-laden river-boats. It was a day of fording unbridged rivers except where a few wooden ferries had been installed. The white man rode his saddle horse or drove behind a team hitched to buckboard or wagon. The Indian brave, and perhaps his older sons, rode their small ponies, while his squaw rode the travois horse, with the smaller children safely fastened in the travois behind.

One railway line had already pushed its way westward to the Rocky Mountains. But for the new settlers in their humble homes inconveniences did everywhere abound. It was the day of the tallow candle and the coal-oil lamp. It was the day of slab and tar-paper shacks. Mail was something one did not expect until it arrived. There was no certainty nor regularity in its delivery, whether by stage-coach or by train. All these things were part of the heavy curtain of silence and far distance that cut off the adventurous souls who had come from their dear ones left behind in other lands. Then, too, the uncertainties of a rigorous climate made it impossible for a traveller to know whether his journey would take him days or weeks. Because of the scarcity of stopping-places along the way there was a real danger in the matter of blizzards while on a long trail. So travellers, except in the warmest season, usually were muffled to the ears in warm clothing. Even now I often recall an amusing tale I heard in my childhood. It was told by Jim Fuller, foreman of the St. Louis Cattle Company, to point out some of the hazards of travel in those days. It seems that Howell Harris, manager of the St. Louis Cattle Company (better known as the Circle Ranch) and Jim Fuller had to make a winter trip by team and buckboard between Fort Macleod and Calgary. As they travelled over the snow-covered prairie they were amazed to find many large rocks on the trail. They had never noticed these rocks before and found the going very rough. When they made the return trip next day they looked around very carefully in that locality, but could find nothing except large bare patches of ground surrounded by snowdrifts. The buffalo herd that had

spent the night there had moved on. This story was supposed to give some idea of the hardships of winter travel on the prairie in those days.

Over against this, what do I see today? A man slips on a light coat or sweater over his suit, puts on light rubbers (or maybe none at all) and jumps into a warm luxurious car or on a T.C.A. or C.P.A. plane. In a matter of hours or even minutes he has reached his destination, be it a hundred miles or a thousand. Besides the daily mail he has hourly broadcasts of world and home news by radio and TV. On my automatic dial telephone I talk to my daughter in Montreal in a matter of seconds. All, rich or poor, have electric lights in their homes, and many running water. Gone is the day when we depend on wood and coal for our fuel, with abundant supplies of fuel oil, propane, and natural gas available. If I ride by night in the country districts I find the whole scene lit up through the wonders of rural electrification. The neon lights of the small village on the west spread their beams to encircle my home grounds.

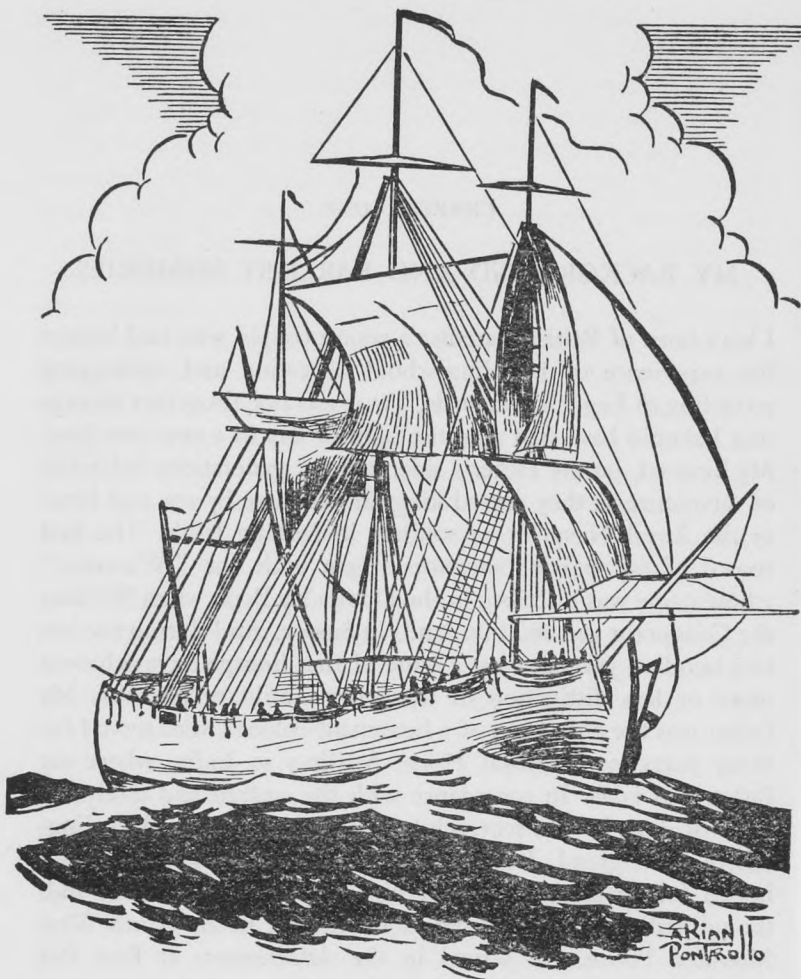
I no longer look out on a dark wide world when I step on my back porch. Instead, I can see flashing lights on every side, for a great highway over one hundred feet wide runs by my front door from south to north. And into it open several streets and highways from west and east. All night long car lights, truck lights, and the lights of oil-rigs and all kinds of heavy construction machinery go flashing by. The lights are reflected on the window panes of my house constantly. The procession of lights on the high thoroughfare looks like a sparkling necklace on the bosom of the earth.

CHAPTER ONE

MY BACKGROUND AND EARLIEST MEMORIES

I WAS born of British parents; a young couple who had known the experience of boarding-school education and upbringing according to English standards. Yet it was not altogether strange that I should have first seen the light of day in a new raw land. My kindred, on my father's side, had for generations led a life of adventure as they served king and country by sea and land; in the Royal Navy, or as soldiers in foreign lands. The first record of my warrior ancestors began with one "Warene" whose name was inscribed in the Domesday Book when William the Conqueror granted him lands in Sussex. And during the last two hundred years at least a score of that lineage have achieved more or less distinction in these same military pursuits. My father was the oldest son of a lieutenant-colonel, who served for many years in the Royal Horse Artillery in India, where my father was born. In accordance with the custom and discipline of those days, he was sent, while still very young, to a boarding-school in England. It was commonly believed that his father hoped for an army career for him. He came to Canada and, though still a minor, enlisted as a constable in the North-West Mounted Police. He served in the detachments at Fort Pitt and Fort Carlton. After the Riel rebellion of 1885 he was transferred to Fort Macleod, and was a member of K Division. When a detachment of that division was sent to Lethbridge, he was one of that number. It was in Lethbridge he met and married my mother.

James Coe and his family had come to Canada in 1883. Although descended from a Huguenot family (the French spelling of the name had been "de Caux") the Coes had become typical English farmers over the centuries since leaving France,



and they had made their home in the counties of Essex and Suffolk. After the British nation had adopted the policies of free trade many farmers felt financial prospects for them in England were becoming very poor. Now James and his family hoped to better themselves by going into ranching in Alberta. The only son, Ernie, a rather delicate youth of seventeen, had been sent to Canada after he finished his schooling in the hope of improving his health in the high dry atmosphere. He was

staying with friends in the Porcupine Hills and soon became enthused with the possibilities of cattle ranching. He strongly urged his parents to sell out and come to Alberta. This they did, and with their three daughters took passage on a sailing-ship for Canada. My mother, Edith, who was the oldest of the family, had already secured her teacher's certificate in England and had for some time been teaching English in Paris to the children of a French Deputy. However, she gave up this very desirable position to accompany her parents to the new land. They found the ship voyage very pleasant and homelike, and it was not until they docked in Quebec City that they felt themselves in a strange country. They did not hear a word of English as they walked on the streets of that old world town, neither could they understand the brand of French they heard spoken. After leaving Quebec they had a long train trip to Calgary. Then they took the stage-coach to Fort Macleod. It was there Ernie met them with a team and wagon, and took them to their first home on Beaver Creek, about ten miles up in the foothills. The first ranch they stayed at was called the Hollis Place. Fort Macleod was the most important spot in all that region, for it was the headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police; not just where the town is now, but on an island in the river north of the present site.

It was all terribly strange and different, but they cheered themselves with the thought of the prosperity that lay ahead, once they had invested their golden guineas in cattle to stock their ranch. Too trusting my grandfather was, and too late he realised how foolish he had been to take the word of a stranger, no matter how fair-spoken, in the matter of buying his foundation stock. Delegated to purchase the cattle, and furnished with the funds to pay for them: neither cattle nor money ever showed up. And after weary weeks and months of waiting the Coes were utterly cast down to hear that the cattle had perished on their trip from the United States to Alberta. They had no choice but to look elsewhere for a living.

They soon moved to Fort Macleod where there was a demand for Mr. Coe's veterinary skill and experience. There he worked as veterinarian for the police force, while Ernie went out to work for neighbouring ranchers. My mother soon opened a

private school at the fort, as there was no public school. She had some white children, but most of her pupils were half-breeds. Later the Coes moved to the growing town of Lethbridge, and at first lived in the ferry house across from the Federal and Sheran mines. (George Harding, veteran of the American Civil War, and a former slave, was the ferryman). My grandfather was still in the employ of the police detachment, while my mother again opened a private school. The Lethbridge School District had not yet been organised, and Miss Edith Coe taught her pupils in one room of a building known as the Miners' Library. And to her in later years was given the honour of being called the first school teacher in Lethbridge. But today there is not a trace of this building—one of the very first, situated north and west of the present Canadian Pacific depot. My parents, Constable Falkland Warren, of "K" Division of the N.W.M.P., and Miss Edith Coe, were married by Rev. E. K. Matheson, of the North-West Territories, on one of his occasional visits when he came for confirmation or marriage rites among the Anglican people of Lethbridge. For their first home the young couple secured a small slab shack owned by the first harness-maker in the town, Harry Hutchinson. Harry had a lot on what is now Third Avenue and Fourth Street. He had a fairly large house himself, and the slab shack was on the back of his lot. And in such humble surroundings I was ushered into the world by a young doctor, F. H. Mewburn, who later was to become famous throughout the English-speaking world as surgeon and physician. I was a very puny delicate baby, according to what I have been told. I was given three names: Ernest, after my uncle; Falkland, a traditional family name among the Warrens; and Herbert (my mother's choice), which my grandmother shortened down to Bertie for everyday use.

We did not remain too long in the little slab dwelling, and my memories of it are very dim and confused. Mr. Hutchinson, our good friend, visited us regularly, but I have no clear picture of him until after we moved to another house. (Some years later he went back to Ontario to marry a former sweetheart who had been widowed). Then there was a carpenter, Carl Murray, who lived just south around the corner of the block. One day

when he was away from home, I found my way to his carpenter shop. I found a roll of tar-paper and unrolled it, dragging it all over his lot. When he came home he pretended to be very angry. "Who did that?" he yelled at me. Without a moment's hesitation I answered, "Murray!" He thought that story was worth repeating to my parents. (I don't know just what it proves about my truthfulness)! The first incident I remember really clearly was the fire in the Davis livery stable when a lot of horses perished. It was just across from our house and down the street to the east. The next morning Mrs. Bill Barnes, a friend of my mother's, took us down to see the ruins. It seemed to me that dead horses were lying everywhere. A lot of Indian women were there cutting up the horse-meat, and loading it on buckboards and wagons. They were loading it on travois too, all ready to take away to their Reserve across the Belly River. I never forgot that scene.

The first home I can remember clearly was the "Charlie Ross" house, on a spot south-east of the present intersection of Sixth Avenue and Fifth Street. All the country around was open prairie, and there were no numbered streets or avenues. Our house was a little white house with a pitch roof and a lean-to on the back. Across the street, about one hundred feet away, was the old Conybeare house which was built of bricks. After Mr. Conybeare built a house at Riverview and moved there, a Mr. Tennant, who worked in the Customs Office, took over the brick house. In later years the brick house was used as a store for a long time.

Right close to us lived a Mr. Johnson, who had a son, Bill, just about my age, and a daughter, Annie. Annie afterwards married Jim Fuller, Junior, who was son of James Fuller, one-time foreman of the Circle herds that ran on the Canadian side of the border. Back of our house was the house of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Howard. They were a very well-dressed couple. He was good-looking, very striking in appearance, and was considered a social leader. He was also known as a practical joker. Among our closest friends was an English family by the name of Barnes. Bill Barnes had already opened up a coal mine on the river bottom. Later it was known as the Old Barnes Mine and should not be confused with the Royal Mine, which was

a shaft mine on top of the hill and was opened at a later date. Sometimes we visited at the home of a very large, tall woman who lived near Carl Murray's. She was Mrs. Furman, the mother of Charlie and Johnny Furman, who ranched in Alberta for so many years. They had come from the United States. I did not see the sons very often as they were away working. Carl Murray and Mr. Hutchinson often came to our house for meals on special occasions. I remember one dinner particularly when my mother refused to let me have any more meat, saying I had enough already. But somehow my father managed to get another piece for me. Another day I really got into trouble when I went out wading through eight or nine inches of deep snow. I was a wee fellow and not dressed for outdoors when I happened to see Maggie Johnson out playing on their lot. I sneaked outside, but found it hard going through the soft snow. I managed to fall down in all the dirtiest places, and got a proper tanning for making such a mess of my clothes.

My father did not remain long in the police force after his marriage, but kept himself busy at carpenter work and mining. However, he was not satisfied with life in Lethbridge, and when I was between three and four years old he went back to the Prince Albert region where he was well acquainted. He soon found work teaching carpentry in the Indian schools, as he was an excellent craftsman. He did not return to visit us for many years, though my mother, myself, and baby sister continued to live in Lethbridge. At this time Lethbridge could hardly be called a town. The land up and down Fifth Street, around where we lived, was divided into acre lots. Many of these lots were vacant, and on others there might be only one or two houses. In fact, the houses were so far apart that it worried my mother to have me go to a neighbour's house on a stormy day.

After he came to Lethbridge Ernie had gone into the draying business. Now my mother and he decided to buy an acre lot between them. This lot was across the street and further south, on Seventh Avenue. There my grandparents and Ernie built themselves a four-room frame house, while my mother had a small cabin built beside it for herself and her two children. I might say the larger house is still standing and in use as a dwelling. From that time on my childhood memories are very

clear. I often used to walk to Bennett's Livery Stable (where Draffin's drug store is now) and watch the men breaking and riding wild horses. A store clerk named Mr. Rose used to practise riding a bicycle along Fifth Street, coasting down the hill from the site of Pyramid Motors to Seventh Avenue. His bicycle had a very high wheel in front, with a low one behind.

There was a wonderful sandpit on the open prairie just about where the Lethbridge Laundry is now. With other small neighbour children I spent a lot of time playing there. Near us there was a big open field fenced in with barbed wire. It was called Duff's Field then, but later the Duff Addition. I could see Riverview to the west, the river, and down the coulees. I remember the old-timers like Mr. Oliver, Mr. Case, Mr. Withers and Mr. McEwen, out trap-shooting not far away. We could see Indians any time we were outside. They might be selling buffalo horns, or wild berries, or ponies. The Hyssop brothers had the water-wagons that supplied the town with water. I could not have been more than five years old when Joe Miron, who was delivering water for them, called at our house one cold winter night and told us that Tom Purcell had shot Dave Acres. (They were neighbours and ranchers). I often used to look across the river where the Neidig house and homestead was. It was not so long before I watched it burn to the ground one Christmas Day. Then I remember walking with my mother to the Sheran ranch across the river. It was a long walk, but I enjoyed playing with the children. There were six of them: Ed, Jimmie, Rosie, Agnes, Maisie and Cassie. But I have long since lost track of those who are still living.

CHAPTER TWO

MY FIRST LONG JOURNEY

I COULD not have been more than six years old when I made my first long trip from home. It was about forty-five miles from Lethbridge, to a wheat farm at Willow Creek. I was invited by a Mr. Robins, who was a good friend of the Coes. He had to haul his wheat to Lethbridge for shipping, and he thought a trip and visit to his farm would be a treat to me; and I would be company for him on the way, for there was only one stop on the long haul and that was at Fort Macleod. He had fine big horses and drove a six-horse outfit. For miles after we left Lethbridge I could see nothing but long, winding, grassy trails through endless hills. Then we came to a river-crossing or ford. We passed by the stopping-place which was kept by Mr. Urch. I can remember when we came to Round Lake and to Rocky Coulee. I thought it was a dreadfully wild and rocky country. Then I caught sight of a coyote. It was the first one I had ever seen, and it seemed to be hunting around for something in the grass. It did not pay any attention to us, but I was quite scared and asked Mr. Robins whether it would jump into the wagon after us. He was very sure it would not hurt us.

When we got as far as Fort Macleod Mr. Robins went into the store after his groceries and left me in the high wagon. He tied the horses to a telephone post and told me not to get out. (I couldn't have climbed out even if I wanted to)! But I was really frightened when the wind blew very hard, shaking and swaying the wagon. So I got down into the bottom of the box where the wind did not seem so bad. Mr. Robins was a long time in the shop and I fell asleep. When I woke up we were moving again, and it looked as if the mountains were coming to meet us. But they were a long time coming, and I fell

asleep again. When I woke up once more I found myself in a strange house with an old man I had never seen before looking after me. This was Mr. Robins' father, who lived with him, for Mr. Robins himself had no wife. His father was very kind to me and stuffed me with cookies, prunes, and sugar while he waited for his son to come in to supper. For supper we had potatoes, bread, jam, and tea. I remember the old father put jam on nearly everything he gave me to eat. I think he did this to keep me happy, and all supper time he was so busy looking after me that he didn't take time to eat anything himself. Or perhaps he had his supper before we got home—I don't know! Right after supper I fell asleep in my chair, and did not know any more that night. But he must have carried me to his bed, for when I woke up in the morning I was there, and by that time Mr. Robins had finished his breakfast and gone out to work. He was busy greasing his wagon and loading wheat for the next trip.

I found the house interesting, for it was built of logs and divided in two by a canvas partition. For about two hours I was very busy looking around at all the new things on a strange place. I was very happy till suddenly I got homesick and started to cry. The old man did not know what to do for me then, as there were no other children around for me to play with. He was greatly worried, and took me out to look at the chickens and gather the eggs. Then he took me to the hay-mow and showed me a lot of mice running about. And he showed me the cats. Then he said, "Let's see how many mice we can catch!" So we spent a long time out there trying to catch mice. Then the old gentleman told me all the interesting stories he could think of. And the hours of the day passed by. Before night Mr. Robins told me we would be starting back to Lethbridge the next morning. I was very happy then, and did not feel homesick any more. I remember we had a very nice trip going back the next day, and the journey didn't seem so long any more.

After it was all over this trip gave me lots to talk about when I was with my playmates. It was something for me to boast about too, for most trips made by the children in those days were short ones, like the ones I made with Ernie and my

mother in the countryside around Lethbridge. We often visited at the Joshua Davis place across the river. Their big house was built right up against a steep heavy coulee bank. There were several children there who were near my own age—dandy playmates for me. Or I might drive out to the George Houk ranch with Ernie. That was south-west up the St. Mary's River. I remember there was a small North-West Mounted Police detachment nearby. Across the Pothole and up the east side of St. Mary's lived George Russell and his wife. They had several sons, one of whom was killed in the First World War. Their little daughter was drowned in St. Mary's River, a short distance below their house. Today I count among my friends a grandson of George Russell; he is Andy Russell, the famous guide and photographer of wild life. At that time George Russell had a coal mine at the Pothole.

Sometimes we went to Eugene (Paddy) Hassen's ranch at the mouth of Pothole Creek. They called Paddy a "squaw-man." He had about twelve hundred horses branded E.H. His son Danny was somewhat younger than me, but we were very good friends at a later date. An old man that I considered very interesting was Coyote Henry, who spent the winter months in his little shack in Lethbridge. He was a wolf hunter—a wolfer they called him. And he was of great help to the ranchers of that day, for he hunted wolves and their pups with much perseverance. But he had some odd ideas that made him a butt of their jokes. For instance, he always imagined he was being pursued by "mountain lions" and would be looking for them in the most unlikely places. Apart from that, he raised some good Clydesdale colts and put up wild hay for them at a small place he lived on in summer near Chin. I never did hear what his right name was. A very busy man was Job Reed, who was both milkman and market-gardener, but he had several sons to help him. And Alf Watson's father was the man who looked after the town herd in those days. He had about two hundred milk cows and he took them out to pasture every day. Dave Whitney's lived south-east of us, out on the open prairie, while Bill Oliver lived away to the north-east. William Henderson lived east of us, and had a big house on the south side of Seventh Avenue, while Richard Urch's place was on the west

side. The old exhibition and fair grounds lay about three-fourths of a mile south-east of Henderson's, across the open prairie. Other well-remembered neighbours were Bill Hutton (a horse rancher), Jack Johnson, Joe Swedish, Ben Burrell, Evan Cole, Harry Howard, Tom Clipsham, and Mr. Tuff.

CHAPTER THREE

MY SCHOOLDAYS

I STARTED to school when I was seven years old. Before that my mother taught me. The school I attended was the Old Central School. All the way was open prairie except for a few fences along the lanes between our neighbours' houses. These lanes led off to what might be called the business part of the town. The police barracks were right across from the school, and there was a footpath through the grounds. Close by was Job Reed's stone house, which is still standing. Jim Perry's wooden house was on the east side too. Beginning with the very first day my mother took me to the school, I took a lively interest in everything that went on there. The principal of the school was Mr. Latimer, and one of my first teachers was Miss Wilson. Another favourite teacher was Laura Davis, who afterwards became Mrs. Niven. The teacher that left the most lasting impression with me was Mr. W. A. Hamilton, who was school principal at the time I left school. As I remember the school building it had six rooms. The grade rooms were downstairs and the high school upstairs. Only Protestant children attended, as the Roman Catholic children attended the separate school or convent. When I try to remember the children who attended school when I did, a great number come to mind, but I am sure there are many more I have forgotten. Some of those I knew best were the Ben and Dave Whitney families, Joe and Abe Tennant, Bill Henderson's, Bill Oliver's, Charlie McLaughlin, the Conybeare children, Evan's, Henson's, and three families of Johnson's. Then there were Dickie, Jean, and Nettie Urch, Doug Robson (who afterwards became a great hockey player), L. P. Tuff's son and daughter (Mr. Tuff was a shoemaker and a noted market gardener who was a great joker too), and Monica McCaugherty,

who afterwards married Fred Erving. There was also a studious boy called Billy Frame, who not so long ago was Superintendent of Education for Alberta. Dave Whitney's oldest son, Stanley, became one of the most famous rope-twirlers in North America. Several Hyssop children, brothers, sisters, cousins, went to school then. Two MacNabb boys, Tommy and Cliff, were the sons of Tom MacNabb, master mechanic for the C.P.R.

There were three Whitney families with children in school : Dave's, Walter's, and Ben's. There were three Hyssop families : Abe's, Charlie's, and Bill's. The three Conybeare children, daughters and son of the town lawyer, were Ethel, Elaine, and Bruce. Dr. Mewburn's children were Hastings, Helen, and Arthur. Harold Henderson, who was killed in the First World War, was my school-mate. His sisters, Edna, Etta, and Adelina, were pupils at Central School, as was Gladys Downer, daughter of Fred Downer, who was a partner of Bill Henderson's and lived on Third Avenue. Harold and Isobel Henson were school-mates, and Isobel afterwards married Blair Ripley. The Ripleys moved to the Pacific coast in later years. Other pupils that were among my best friends were Gladys, Bill, and Jack Oliver, also George, Bessie and Flossie Brady.

We had no cinemas nor radio then, and no clubs for children. Swimming and skating gave us much fun in our playtime and free hours. We played " pum-pum-pullaway," and marbles. We had foot races and went coasting and sleigh-riding on the coulee hills. Most of the sleds were home-made; some of wood, some of sheets of tin. Cheese boxes made good toboggans. Even scoop shovels came in handy. Anyone who had a " bought " sled was considered among the " Four Hundred." One particularly good spot for sledding and coasting was north-east of the high board fence which extended around the home grounds of the Conybeare residence. The best place for skating was on the low part of Duff's field, called Duff's Lake. It made a fine open-air rink for young and old alike. It was between what is now Eighth and Ninth Avenues, and Sixth and Seventh Streets. In summer time the hunters came to shoot ducks, but in the winter it was a wonderful playground for skaters. Many of the grown-ups were excellent skaters, but I think Mrs. Conybeare was queen of them all at skating.

For swimming there was "The Slough" formed by a backwater of the river on the east side of an island, and west of Riverview. On warm summer evenings and on Saturdays, it was a very busy spot. The boys went "skin bathing" when alone; for mixed bathing there were old dresses and trousers.

My folks attended the Anglican Church, which we always called the Church of England. And well do I remember old Captain Deane, who when I was a small child sometimes carried me on his shoulder. I went to the Presbyterian Sunday School where J. D. Higinbotham was superintendent. I remember their minister, Rev. Charles McKillop, and his wife. My folks always had the greatest respect and liking for them both. Another important man I recall was the town policeman, Tom Lewis. As I said before, Indians were a very familiar sight to me. They had a ford across St. Mary's River where they used to cross with their saddle-ponies, buckboards, and travois. When "scrip time" came they used to live in tepees west and south of where we lived. In summer time they often came to the door, peddling hat racks of buffalo horns, gloves, leggings, jackets, bead-work, and berries in season. They used to have ponies for sale until a law was passed forbidding white people to buy horses from them unless they had a sale permit from the Indian Agent.

Galt Gardens did not exist then, but there was a bare open square much used for sports, such as lacrosse, football, and foot-races. The Indians held many "tea dances" there. The men and women danced separately, the men shouting and waving. The women, always holding closely together side by side, slowly circled sideways in one direction while they intoned a sort of quiet, low chant. After that the men passed the hat for money with which to buy tea. Many Indian graves were on the river bottom; the heavy boughs of the big cottonwood trees near the location of the high level bridge being used as burial places for the dead. Sometimes we caught sight of an Indian woman mourning her dead in a sad wailing lament. Below the Galt Coal Company hospital and west of it was Medicine Rock Coulee and Medicine Rock. There the Indians brought tobacco and other gifts, and left them lying on the rock. When I was

still very young I had been taken down to see the rock by my elders.

I had a very good friend among the Indians while I was attending school. He was a Blood Indian interpreter who worked for the N.W.M.P. at the Police Barracks.

His name was Big Jim and he lived on the river-bottom west of us. Every morning he went by our house on his way to work just when I was going to school, and he took the same path. So we became good friends as we walked along together. He told me about his children who were going to school on the Reserve. Once I visited at his home. We had a visitor at our house who was strange to Indian ways, and she said she would like to see an Indian home. I was allowed to go along when the older folks and the visitor paid a visit to Big Jim and his family. They were living in a tepee, and inside the tepee was a cute little hammock for their small baby. The hammock was about three feet above the ground, and was strung between two stakes driven into the ground. After I left school I did not see Big Jim for many years. Then he did not recognise me at all. He even pretended he did not understand me when I spoke to him. But when I told him who I was he was quite able to understand and talk English.

The first mine shaft I remember was Galt Company No. 1, near the east side of where the C.P.R. overhead bridge was afterwards put in. Close by lived Tom McNabb's, Owen Delay's, Halliday's, and some other families I do not remember. West of the Library and the "Terrace" were a few miners' shacks. The Terrace was an apartment house where several families lived. North of the Library in the coulee was Johnny Bruce's brickyard, which was a going enterprise for several years. It turned out bricks for many of Lethbridge's best old houses. And the brickyard hill was a wonderful spot for the boys to play in rough-and-tumble sports. On the river-bottom, near the power-house site, the Ashcroft's settled. They were coal-miners from Scotland. Lethbridge had a gunsmith's shop owned by Case and Withers. Clarence Lowther and Al Keyes were well-known blacksmiths. The first shoemaker I knew was Bill MacDougall who came from the East. His shop was down the street from the Fire-hall. My Uncle Ernie liked his work so

much that he always had his riding-boots made by Mr. Mac-Dougall. Ott was the town barber; a great joker who loved to tilt with his friend, L. P. Tuff, the grower of such huge cabbages according to his own story. He used to tell how he had to prop them up to keep them from rolling down in a heavy wind and breaking his neighbour's fence.

When the C.P.R. began to build the railway across the St. Mary's River the children around town used to go out and watch. There was a big elevator grader at work, and dozens of dump wagons were used to carry dirt to the fills and grades. Everything was done with horses and mules. A great many wooden bridges, perhaps as many as thirty, carried the road straight across the coulees from Lethbridge to the mouth of St. Mary's River. The road followed away from Lethbridge by way of the present Fair Buildings, Six Mile Coulee, and the site of Fort Whoop-Up. Across the St. Mary's it ran through the Blood Indian Reserve to Fort Mcleod without crossing the Belly River.

Ten or twelve horses were used on one grader, with a "push-team" of from four to eight following behind. There were three horses on each dump wagon, and extra teams for the scrapers. These animals were housed either under canvas in big tents, or in big single-board wooden sheds. And these dumb beasts knew full well when it was meal-time or quitting time. When they heard the gong they would stop dead in their tracks or else hit for the camp. I remember well one fine Sunday in 1896 when some of our family walked out as far as the Fair Grounds site to watch the men working. I was with my uncle Ernie the first time I saw the site of the old Fort Whoop-Up. The fort itself had already been destroyed. I was about seven years old, and I remember the few charred logs still lying around. Ernie called my attention to a few holes in the logs, saying there might be some old bullets there. I dug with my jack-knife and fished out some leaden pellets. When I was eight years old my father sent me a .22 rifle as a present. I was very proud of it, but I was not allowed to take it out when I was alone, or when other children were along with me. About this time my uncle got me a pony to ride. His name was Tony. He was old and stiff, and I soon found out he had a bad habit

of stumbling, and falling down in a helpless sort of way.

This habit made it hard for me to ride him when he was trotting, although I had quite a comfortable saddle. It was an old discarded police saddle that had been through a fire, and Ernie had fixed it up for me. Then my grandmother put a sheep-skin seat over the frame, and I found it worked fine. It was complete with stirrups and cinch, and I went riding with my uncle whenever I could. Pretty soon I was a lot of help to him.

Like all children I loved to go berry-picking, and the berries were very plentiful. During July and August everyone went to a spot known as Captain Jack's Bottom. There they filled pails, tubs, baskets, flour-sacks, boxes, and anything else they could use, with saskatoons, bulberries, choke-cherries, and even raspberries. Captain Jack's Bottom was south of the Barnes river-bottom, near where the Dupen and Royal View mines were opened later. There were a few homesteaders living there then, such as Mr. Barnes, Mr. Cave, and Mr. Hyssop. From this abundance of wild fruit the women made jams, jellies, and wines. My Grandmother Coe was well known for her skill in making wine from choke-cherries and saskatoons. Her youngest daughter was named Alice Rosamund—Ruby for short—and one hot Saturday afternoon she and I went to Scotty Ross Bottom to pick raspberries. These were growing wild in a garden on the river-bottom that Mr. Ross had planted before he moved away. A neighbour had told us how the berries were going to waste with no one there to look after them. We found everything quite overgrown with brush and weeds. In fact it took us quite a while, and a lot of trouble, to find the berry patch. Everything around was very quiet until suddenly we heard a heavy crash as if something big and heavy were breaking through the brush. Then a big brown bear came into sight. I was scared stiff, but the bear never stopped, even to look at us. He hurried away as fast as he could lumber along, while we stood rooted to the spot till we could neither see nor hear him any more. Then we decided not to stay there any longer, but we made our way out of the woody tangle as quickly as we could. We knew the bear had been feasting on the ripe berries, when he caught our scent.

A favourite ghost story of my early boyhood days was *Bill*

Fixely's Light. It was a strange reddish light that could often be seen over Eight Mile Lake. There was a story that Bill Fixely was an early rancher who met his death through foul play. This story was widespread through town and country, and the old timers would say to each other when they saw this weird light, "Bill Fixely has his light out tonight, I see!" From high points along the river banks, it was plainly visible. No doubt it was reflected rays of some phosphorescent gleam on the waters of the lake.

Out on the sidewalk in front of the Harry Bentley store was the first gramophone I ever saw. It had earphones, and for a dime we could plug in and listen to the record. The first pictures I saw were lantern slides. I saw them at a Christmas concert in the Convent. My mother and myself had been invited to attend as my sister attended school there. The Roman Catholic priest, Father Van Tighem, sat down beside me, taking me more or less under his wing. While he was very earnestly explaining to me the pictures being shown, he caught hold of my ear—quite unconsciously, I expect. In his enthusiasm he would give it a jerk every once in a while to emphasise his words, "Just look at that!" That was one occasion I never forgot. On New Year's Eve my mother, uncle, and two aunts always went to the Pemmican Club or Old Timers' Ball. It was held in the old Opera House. George Houk was the first square dance caller that I can remember. In those days it was the first settlers of the town who attended rather than the young people.

My Uncle Ernie was quite a pool player and enjoyed the game very much. He soon became acquainted with other old timers of a like mind: L. P. Tuff, Bill Ott, Tom Kirkham (tinsmith), Dave Brodie who sold hardware; Jim Thomson and Frank Arnold (ranchers); Jack Brodie, Bill McAdoo, and Charlie Van Horne, in the cartage business. The Arnold family—father, mother, two sons (Frank and Bill), and two daughters (Jennie and Lily), visited a lot at the home of my grandparents. Their home was near Mud Lake in the Rocky Coulee country. Herbert (Daddy) Savary and his brother Charlie (who worked for the Hudson Bay Company), were very good friends of the family, as were the Urch's, Mr. and Mrs. Eli Hodder, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Lewis and their daughter Thelma, Rev. Charles McKillop,

Mr. Horner, Jack Hemsley, George Arrowsmith, George Harding, and "Bunch Grass Bill" Lickinger. These are among the ones I remember best at an early age.

Our water-barrels had to be kept in the house in winter time, otherwise they would have frozen up. The Hyssop brothers hauled the town water in big tanks, and everyone had to have their own water-barrel. Sam Brady, the town baker, delivered bread all around town, and his horse Butch was very smart. Once started on the bread route, Butch and the bread rig would stop at every house along the route. Ernie did a lot of draying in those days; baggage and furniture, and also filling orders for coal. Of course he used horses for draying, and had a horse-barn on one corner of our acre lot. Coal-mining was the most important industry in Lethbridge then. The coal was hauled by yard engines to what they called the "High Line," and the cars were dumped into chutes from which the coal was hauled away in wagons. Some of the early mine buildings were a row of long, narrow slate-coloured "Company" houses, north and west of where the present C.P.R. depot is. But they have long since been torn down. As I said before, I often accompanied my Grandfather Coe on veterinary trips to the northern part of the town, or North Ward as it was called then. Many of the miners lived there, and if their milk cow developed some ailment they would send for him. I went along for company, and soon got to know the lay of the land.

Perhaps the biggest event of the year for that part of the town was the annual "Miners' Picnic." There was always lots of beer, lemonade, tea, coffee, sandwiches and cake. It was indeed a day of feasting and games, with a race-track near the site of the old hangar, and an open-air pavilion for dancing. Much the funniest, to my way of thinking, was catching the greased pig, or climbing a greased pole. There was always a lot of people, men, women, and children ready to try for the pig. The pig itself was the prize to the lucky winner, who managed to catch him.

CHAPTER FOUR

I RIDE WITH ERNIE

AFTER I got my pony and saddle I got used to riding in spite of his habit of falling down once in a while. When my mother saw that I had become a pretty good rider she bought me a better pony by the name of Molly. Molly was an Indian pony and had belonged to the Cole boys. Now that the boys did not need her any longer, their father sold her to us for seven dollars. And never was seven dollars better spent. She was my constant riding pony for several years, and she had some fine colts that started me out in the business of raising horses. During holidays, whenever it was safe and convenient, I practised shooting prairie chickens and rabbits with my new .22 rifle. Now that I had Molly I used to go out riding with Ernie every Saturday, and helped him herd his cattle. He had a good-sized herd by this time and he pastured them in the rolling hills south of Lethbridge, on Six Mile Coulee, and along the St. Mary's River. His brand was E.C. on the left shoulder, both for his cattle and his horses.

I got my start in raising cattle while still very young, and it came about in this way, while my uncle's cattle along with many other herds were pasturing on the rolling hills and Six Mile Coulee. One of Ernie's cows seemed to have lost her calf, as she kept bawling all the time and her udder was swollen. We hunted all over, but could not find the calf either dead or alive. Then about a week later someone told us that a farmer on Six-mile was caring for a stray calf. We followed up the story and went to see the calf. The stray was the "dead spit" of our cow, but when we brought her over they did not recognise each other after being separated so long. However—one man's word being as good as another's—the farmer agreed that Ernie should have the calf if he paid the price of its feed

and care. That was fair enough as otherwise the calf would have perished. Ernie agreed, and then gave me the calf for my



own. That calf was the first I could call my own, my one "head of cattle."

We covered a lot of country while we were herding our stuff, and it was an all-day job. So we never thought of leaving home without packing enough lunch for a long day. It would usually consist of sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, cookies, some tea and sugar, and a can to make tea in when we stopped. Of course we had no Thermos bottles then. Often we went east to the Chin country where the horses travelled in large bands—we called them bunches. They were pretty wild, as often the colts were two or three years old before they were corralled and branded. A lot of cattle herds ran together too, in the same district where ours ran. I remember particularly the Curly Whitney cattle and the S. H. Fairfield herds, as they ran with ours most of the time. S. H. Fairfield was a brother to W. H. Fairfield, and their sister-in-law, Mamie Paterson, did a lot of riding with us when a young girl.

With all this riding around, I had the best chance in the world to build up my collection of bird eggs. Ernie encouraged me in this, and I soon began to take great pride in it. My prize egg was a curlew's which I had saved under considerable difficulty. It was about as big as a hen's egg. After I found it I was carrying it home in my bare hand while riding horseback. Harry Cockle, an old friend of Ernie's, was riding along with me. We came to a little ditch about two or three feet wide, and probably the same in depth. I guess I was just trying to show off before Harry how well I could jump a ditch. But I had forgotten to see that my saddle was tight before I jumped, and it turned sideways. My pony quickly bucked me off, but to my surprise, when I picked myself up, I found the egg in my hand still unhurt. Once I entered my collection at the Lethbridge Fair and won a prize. But later when I went out to the ranch on Belly River with Ernie, I felt I could not take care of it, so gave it to Mr. Hamilton, my school principal.

I forget the year, but I never forgot the time Sir Wilfred Laurier visited Lethbridge, and made a speech to open the Fair. I think it was in the Galt Square, but flags and bunting were flying everywhere. Sir Wilfred had most lavish praise for the pigs being shown. This caused me much wonder for

only one rather poor-looking sow with litter had been entered. "Never have I seen such wonderful pigs!" I could hardly believe my ears! Years later I realised that it was not at all likely he had seen Lethbridge's lone hog exhibit. Rather he was accustomed to the Fairs of Eastern Canada where good hog exhibits were a matter of course.

One day when the work crews were on railway construction near the site of Fort Whoop-Up, Ernie and I had quite a memorable experience. We were riding on Little Bottom and found one of our cows stuck in the mud. After we got her out we found she had no strength left to climb to the top of the hill. We went home and got a team and wagon, with which we would carry her up to the level of the prairie. From a shelf on the hillside we got her loaded on the wagon. So far, so good! But we found the horses either could not or would not pull that much weight up the steep coulee, and we were at our wits' end. Then Ernie suggested that we ask the foreman of the work train crew if they could give us some help up the hill. Pretty soon the work train came along bringing the crew back from dinner, and stopped at the crossing of the road we were trying to climb. The foreman offered to give us what help he could. Then the Orientals in the work party began to swarm around the wagon, fastening strong ropes to the wagon-tongue and axles and throwing all their weight into pulling it up. Still neither team nor wagon would budge, in fact the team held back. Quickly another big party of the work crew ran down the hill to push the wagon from behind. And in this way, by human strength alone, the wagon, team, and cow were carried, dragged, and pushed until they were up on the level of the prairie.

One Saturday I went out riding with a neighbour by the name of Sammy Dunbar. He was a Scotchman and lived one street east of us. He had some cattle which ran on the west side of the traffic bridge. Sometimes, on Saturday he would pay me five dollars (a fortune in those times), to help him gather his cattle, brand them, and take them home. One of these times we were having quite a time getting a yearling steer out of the coulee at Sheran's. I took a notion to rope the steer, and that might have been all right if I had not forgotten to make sure

my saddle was tight. I was old enough to have remembered that, without anyone having to remind me. My saddle was quickly jerked sideways and off I went. However my weight stopped the steer and Sammy came up. I wanted to get on horse-back and lead the steer, but Sammy wouldn't let me. He got his own rope and tied the two ropes together. Then he told me to lead the steer on foot while he led both saddle-horses. This worked fine till the steer decided he wanted to get away and he passed me. I had quite a coil of rope on my arm, and in trying to hold the animal I dropped the coil. It was not long until I caught my foot and spur in the tangle of rope, and then I could no longer hold the steer. He soon dragged me down and began to haul me at a very rapid pace through the cherry brush. When this happened Sammy cut across in front and caught up to us. By our combined efforts we managed to hold him, stop him, and finally to let him go free. For a while it looked like a dangerous situation for me, as I was neither big nor heavy for my age.

One of the necessary tasks in connection with feeding saddle-horses was the yearly putting up of wild hay, and it was an event which I greatly enjoyed from the time I was old enough to be allowed to accompany the hay-wagons that went to Milk River Ridge. At first I used to keep very close to the wagons if I heard a coyote howl. Or sometimes it would be the occasional wolf. We used to sleep under the wagon, and our grub-box was kept on the back of the hay-rack between the extended bed-pieces. We had to have hay on hand for our three or four saddle-horses which we kept up all the time, picketed on Fourth Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Then there were Ernie's draying teams, and a few weaner calves and poor cows.

From the time I was eight years old and on, I used to go with Ernie and my aunts on fishing trips to the mouth of the Little Bow. When there we visited often with our old friends, the Fullers, at the Circle Ranch.

CHAPTER FIVE

HAULING HAY—AND OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

THERE WAS a coal miner named Bob Nearing who worked for the Galt Coal Company at No. 1 mine. In the summer time he used to cut wild hay around the Hudson Bay Lakes on Milk River Ridge. He was a very strong man, and put up not only what he needed himself, but bunched whatever was over and sold it to his neighbours, who brought along their own hay-racks and hauled it home. We used to buy from him, paying \$1.50 a ton in the field. I always had great fun on those hay-making trips. And I can't remember ever eating anything that tasted as good as Bob's boiled dinners. In fact everything we ate out there tasted extra good after our long hours in the open air. As a rule I ate my dry lunch early in the day while on our way to the hay-camp, and I would still be hungry. Then Bob would have some wild ducks in an iron pot, together with a loaf of bread, a can of corn, a can of tomatoes, and some potatoes. He boiled them all together, and had it well seasoned. Then he would dish it out of the iron pot with a tin cup. To me it was a feast fit for a king.

There were many others putting up hay in that region, as the Police had a great deal hauled in for horse-feed. That was stacked in corrals close to where we lived. It was brought in by "jercline" outfits by way of the old Fort Benton trail. The trail wound from the old Fair Grounds on Thirteenth Street, through Six Mile Coulee, between Sixteen and Eighteen Mile Lakes (where Raymond is now), on across Kipp Coulee and Middle Coulee. Middle Coulee was very steep and when we went down we had to lock the wheels. We tied a chain over the rim of the wheel and fastened it to the middle of the front axle, which stopped the wheel from turning. Sometimes when

it was icy or frosty we had to rough-lock the wheel. That was a short piece of very heavy chain put over the rim of the wheel, and so fastened that the heavy links dragged directly beneath the wheel. The jerkline outfits might have twelve, fourteen, or even sixteen horses all strung out, two by two, and driven by what was called a jerkline. This was a strong light rope strung through the hames-ring, up the side of the teams, and fastened to a loose ring on a chain under the bit of the left lead horse. The horses were trained to obey the jerking of the line. That jerking motion would carry the ring over to the right, and thus turn the lead team right, while a steady pull would bring or pull them to the left. As all the other teams were tied to the double-trees, they had to follow. Turning the teams right or left was a real feat of skill. The horses were never unhitched, but the harness was unbuckled from the collar. With a snap in the belly-band the harness could be peeled off the horse and left hooked to the double-trees. Next morning each animal was led to its place, the collar put on and hames-strap buckled. Then the harness was laid over and the belly-band snapped. Then the teams were ready to start. The driver rode a "lazy-board" sticking out in front of the left side of the lead wagon. This board was solid on the inside end, and swung on a short chain on the outer end. Because it had a swinging motion it was not too tiresome to ride on.

There were other hay-yards where great stacks of hay stood every winter. This hay had been hauled in from Milk River Ridge too and belonged to the Whitneys, the Huttons, and the Hyssops. It was stacked south of where the car barns were built later. I was born too late to remember the bull-teams in their heyday, but I can remember plenty of their derelict wagons and boxes scattered around the country. There were a great number of these bull-train wrecks stacked at John Davis' place; wrecks that had once been part of the I. G. Baker outfits. John Davis was a horse-rancher who lived on the river-bottom, about three or four miles from the Lethbridge traffic bridge. My folks were good friends of the Davis family, his wife having been Alice Perry, a sister of Jim Perry's. The older children (Scott and his sister, Mrs. Dr. Rose), were playmates of me and my sister Gundred. John Davis himself suffered for many years

from blindness. Another friend of our family, a plasterer by the name of Paris, lived at the junction of the two railways, the C.P.R. and the A.R. & I. The south road of the A.R. & I. was known as the "turkey track." Sometimes when the snow was real deep a crew was sent out to dig out the train on the turkey track. Down where the railway depot is, they used to have a freight shed built above a raised platform about five or six feet above ground. It was a very handy place for draining away the contents of liquor barrels in Prohibition days, and many amusing stories are told of times when happy anticipation was changed to chagrin and gloom. This space beneath the platform was sometimes in stormy weather used as a shelter for "dogie" cattle that had just been shipped in by train. One spring in a howling May blizzard, a great number of these cattle were crowded in. There, weakened by cold and hunger, and crowded so closely together, they perished in great numbers and were trodden underfoot. It was such a savage storm that range cattle in the Magrath, Raymond, and Milk River districts also perished in large numbers.

Right against the railway track near the International Harvester block were great quantities of old bones that had been gathered into large sheds. The bones had been collected by Indians for the most part, and after being bought by Eastern manufacturers, were shipped back there to use in refining. These sheds must have been about one hundred feet long, and newcomers found them a very strange sight. A new thing too was the irrigation water brought in by the A.R. & I. Company ditches to the land east of the Fair Grounds which had recently been divided into five-acre lots for vegetable growing. The A.R. & I. Company headquarters building on the east side of the square was built of brick, and was much in demand as a dance hall. The Hudson Bay Store at the north end of Fifth Street was a small low building of a light red colour. Almost opposite on the north was the old C.P.R. station, a long, low, grey, wooden structure. J. D. Higinbotham had a drug-store on Fifth Street and Second Avenue, and his brother, E. N. Higinbotham, kept the Post Office in part of the same building. The Fire-hall was on Second Avenue, west of Main Street. Sam Brady's bake-shop was just across the avenue. Three of the bigger

houses on the south side of town were Duff's, Henderson's brick house, and Whitney's stone house.

The first automobile I remember around Lethbridge was a Maxwell belonging to P. L. Naismith who worked for the C.P.R. It had an open top, no doors, a horn with a rubber bulb, acetylene lights, and the petrol tank on the running-board. I think every child I knew in town was there to look at it. The International Harvester Company had the first truck I ever saw. It was a high-wheeled, buggy-like affair, with hard rubber tires. It was steered with a handle, and had a chain drive from the engine to the back wheel. It was used around town for many years.

When I was about ten years old there was a lot of talk among our friends and acquaintances about the Yukon, the Klondike, and the gold rush there. While quite a few talked about going I can remember only one who did go. That was Alexander Stafford, son of an early mine superintendent who had come with his family from Nova Scotia. I believe Alex did well in the Klondike, and when he came back he went into the hardware business in partnership with Dave Brodie.

Some years before this my father, who had travelled about a great deal, located a home in the Okanagan district of British Columbia for his parents, brothers, and sisters. My grandfather Warren had now finished his military career in India and other Empire outposts where he held diplomatic positions, and was old enough to wish to retire. My father persuaded him that Falkland (the location he had chosen and secured in British Columbia), would be a most desirable place to reside for his remaining years. However, although the climate was good, the Warren family found conditions there too primitive for their taste, and soon moved to the young city of Vancouver. One son, William, remained and took over the ranch at Falkland (named for my father and grandfather), and to this day the Warren burial-ground is at Falkland, British Columbia. In the meantime my grandfather Warren, knowing that his son was not supporting us, used to send a quarterly allowance to my sister and myself. Then when I got to High School age, my grandfather made an offer that could have changed my whole way of life. He offered to send me on through University if I would

study for a medical doctor. Perhaps I was too young to realise the value of an education; perhaps there were other factors that had a part in my being loath to accept his offer. For my part I loved riding and took a great interest in cattle and horses. Ernie hated to see me leave, just when I had reached an age when I could be of much help to him. My mother and my grandparents Coe also looked at it from Ernie's point of view, and I received no encouragement from them to accept the offer. In the meantime a war had broken out in South Africa and my father enlisted in the Strathcona Horse. There he served with considerable distinction and before he returned from South Africa he had been promoted to the rank of Captain.

On the other hand I was listening with both ears wide open to any news about the cattle business; about the big ranches and their round-ups, about the quarantine for mange, and the ranchers dipping their stock along the Bow and the Belly Rivers. As early as 1897 I heard of many cattle being killed on the railways; I heard of young cattle dying of blackleg on the Cameron Ranch. I heard such names as Sir Roderick Cameron, J. D. McGregor, O. S. Main, and others who shipped cattle, as well as the men in charge of the Circle and Houk ranches. It was a matter of great interest to the ranching world when George Lane bought the stock of the Diamond O Ranch and brought them in from Dillon, Montana. There was much interest in the bringing in of Percheron horses—a French breed.

The price of beef was early a matter of interest, as well as the bounty that was paid on wolves for many years. One time they talked of beef being down to three or four cents a pound. And I learned the bounty table for wolves "off by heart": twenty-five dollars for a dog-wolf, five dollars for a wolf-pup, and fifty dollars for a she-wolf.

By this time Ernie had about seventy-five head of cattle and perhaps fifty horses. I was always ready to go out riding with him. At this time, my mother, relying on what my Grandfather Warren had written her, attached great importance to the story of a land inheritance in England.

CHAPTER SIX

AS I REMEMBER THEM

ALTHOUGH MY mother was English enough to have a deep and abiding regard for such an inheritance, her information on the subject was not at all definite. My grandfather Warren had told her but a few of the particulars beyond the fact that it was a beautiful country estate in the south of England. His chief interest in telling her was for the purpose of making sure that her marriage certificate and my birth and baptismal records were kept safely and carefully, as he expected that the estate would be mine one day, following the death of my father. Later we heard more of how my grandfather came by his knowledge. It had come to his ears that his cousin, a retired and wealthy naval officer, was willing his estate to my grandfather's nephew—the only one older than my father in line of succession, and a man without children. In the natural course of events he expected the property would come to him (if living), to my father as oldest son, then to me. And so the matter stood for many years.

In the meantime I was not at all interested in such things, and found plenty to take up my time and attention in the world around me, and in my ever-expanding circle of acquaintances and friends. One of the most memorable of the older people I knew was "Daddy" Savary. His real name was Herbert, and because mine was too, he always had a warm spot in his heart for me. Because he was as truly English as my grandparents Coe, and because he had never married, they always made him a welcome guest at their home. They made a point of inviting him to Christmas and New Year's dinners, and he enjoyed mightily the roast goose, the plum pudding with hard brandy sauce, the "patties" and the mince pies. My grandmother

always followed the old English customs for this holiday season as near as she could, for though she ate and slept in Alberta she still "lived" in England. Then in the evening Ernie and he would play cribbage, a game they both dearly loved—until it was time for him to go home, about ten or eleven o'clock.

Although gaunt and forbidding in appearance, particularly as he grew older, and sometimes rough and shaggy from his long life in the open under sun and wind, he was most courtly in manner and very well educated. At the dinner table he would always place a chair for the lady next to him before he sat down himself. He would help a lady put on her coat, or lend his arm to one who was elderly. If he saw a woman bringing in coal or water he would hasten to help, not thinking it a proper kind of work for a woman to do. As long as she lived he wrote often and regularly to his mother in England. In fact, since for the most part he was by himself on his isolated horse-ranch, he lived for his mother's letters, and it was a happy thing for him that she lived to a good old age. Although he was industrious, he never prospered as did some of his brothers who came to this new land, for the gaming-table swallowed up the results of his toil. But he was a great reader, and reading gave him much solace in his lack of prosperity; while he drove around to call on his friends or else "bached" by himself until he found it best to enter the Old Folk's Home at Fort Macleod.

One of my most vivid memories of him was an incident that took place in Lethbridge. He had bought a team of big unbroken "broncs" from either Heber or Bill Perry, while he was our neighbour living in the Urch house. He asked Ernie to help him hitch them to a wagon, and I watched them do it. The horses were already tied up to a telephone pole. Then he climbed into the wagon, took up the lines, and asked Ernie to turn them loose from the post. Ernie was to fasten up the tie-ropes if he could, but if not, then throw them over their backs, trying to scare them back to one side of the post. In a second they were gone like a shot from a cannon, each trying to outrun the other. Horses, wagon, and driver tore along Seventh Avenue for there was nothing to slow them down. When they ran themselves out "Daddy" got them headed back to Lethbridge again, and with the aid of his buggy whip he kept them

pretty well in the middle of the road. Now somewhere out there he met his old friend Jim Pierce, a man who had come from the United States—and he managed to stop his team long enough to invite Jim aboard. Jim wasn't too much impressed with the look of the outfit and he got aboard gingerly. Then he stood straddle of the wagon with one hand on each side of the box. He rode this way for a time, until the two men got into some argument and began to flourish their arms. The horses gave one wild spring, and Jim got his foot caught against the end-gate of the wagon. Out he went on his head, right in the middle of the hard road. "Daddy" stopped his team as soon as he could and came back for Jim. But nothing doing! "I'm not going to get my neck broken by any broncs!" And back he came, trudging into town.

Another important person in my young life was Coyote Henry of whom I have spoken before. He lived all by himself in a little shack on the corner of Fifth Street and Seventh Avenue. He used to drive a fine Clydesdale mare in a two-wheeled cart, and following her would be a couple of colts—a yearling and two-year-old. In the springtime we used to see him start off on hunting trips which might keep him away a couple of months. Then he would bring home wolf and coyote scalps, and sometimes wolf pups. Then he would spend the summer months on a little farm at Chin, where he had built a stable and a little shack. But he had one great fear and that was mountain lions. If anyone so much as mentioned them, Henry would begin to shoot at anything that was moving. For instance on one occasion he was staying at a ranch north of Lethbridge, and in the morning one of the men remarked, "The lions pretty near got you last night, Henry." And he pointed to a hole under the side of the house where the dog had been digging to make a nest for her pups. Henry ran back to get his rifle (an old-timer on which the boys at the ranch had thoughtfully changed the sights), and blazed away, shouting, "There he goes now!" What he saw and was shooting at was the young wrangler on horseback who had gone out to bring in the saddle-horses. As he rounded the bend of the hill from the river-bottom he realised his danger and kept going till he reached his own home about three miles away.

And in the end, before the young fellow would come back to work, the man who had played the joke had to make a trip to his home and explain what had happened.

Eugene (Paddy) Hassen had a horse-ranch that I found a very interesting place to visit. His horses (he probably had anywhere from one to two thousand, branded E.H.), were mottled, pinto, of every colour and description. The horse corrals were of poles, and were always a very busy spot. Near them were several Indian Indian tepees, for Paddy was known as a squawman. The ranch-house itself was white with a red roof, and nestled close to the junction of the Pot-hole River and the St. Mary's. Paddy was something of a red-head and hot-tempered, but well-educated and hospitable. Many a good meal I ate there, the Indians doing the cooking. There was lots of good, plain well-cooked food, and the inside of the house was much like any other white man's. North of the house was a fairly good barn. The buildings were constructed of a mixture of rocks, gravel and lime, but hardly cement as we think of it now.

Another old-timer whom I had known from my earliest days was George Harding. He was one who had lived a life of adventure. He had been born in the United States of slave parents, and fought as a Union soldier in the American Civil War of 1861-1865. About 1883 he came to Canada, and worked on the bull-team trains between Fort Benton and Fort Macleod for the I.G. Baker Company. Between trips he used to stop at a little saw-mill on Beaver Creek. And thus he became acquainted with some of the pioneers of that district. He is said to have been the first ferryman on the ferry between Lethbridge and Telephone Hill. While there he lived for three years in a little shack on the river-bottom. Later he became night-herder for the Circle Ranch, and one winter he became lost in a blizzard. It was thirty hours before they found him. His feet and legs were badly frozen, but his horses were all there. He lost several toes, but finally recovered, only his health and strength were so badly impaired that he could not continue with his work of riding. The Circle foreman then gave him a job of cooking and caretaking at the ranch headquarters. He was working there when I first remember him. He did a little fishing in summer and a little trapping in winter. He was a solitary man, yet was

seemingly happy and contented in his way of life. He was at the Circle when the great fire of 1904 swept down from Claresholm to the mouth of the Little Bow, destroying the Circle barns and haystacks. By 1914 George had become caretaker at the Cameron Ranch south of the Belly River. He was living there in a grey log cabin shaded by large cottonwoods the last time I saw him. Not too long after that he got word that a pension was awaiting him if he returned to Kentucky. And with a team and covered wagon he started back on the long trek to the land of his birth. Of what happened to him after that I have no certain knowledge.

Jack Hemsley was another old-timer who was very familiar to me in the days of my early youth. Jack was an English boy, who at a very early age had come to Canada. He landed in Calgary in 1886 and having received a good trades education in England, he was kept busy as butler, second cook, and dairy operator for the time he remained in that city. After he came to Lethbridge he worked as cook in the Lethbridge Hotel until he took the same position for the Circle outfit down at the mouth of the Little Bow. During the years he was there he became quite an intimate of Howell Harris, manager of the outfit. However, his visits to Lethbridge were still frequent, and he kept more or less in touch with my folks. In his later years he went into ranching in a small way, having holdings on the Bow River. After he retired he spent his remaining years in Vauxhall.

Some good horse ranches that I visited with Ernie were the Double Bracket, belonging to Urch and Patterson; the U L, belonging to Urch and Long; and the Hat, belonging to Dave Whitney. The 5 H horses, belonging to brothers and cousins of the Hyssop clan, were rated about the best type to be seen in that area.

Practically all the men of my acquaintance at that period were duck-hunters, as thousands of waterfowl were to be seen on the numberless lakes and sloughs of a land wherein no man dwelt. They were not afraid of man, and well I remember the day when, a wee lad, I was left at Furman's camp to rest while Ernie and Harry Cockle went on their "bacon roundup." I had begged to be left behind so that I might try to catch some of

the cute-looking little wild ducks that were swimming about. I tried for two hours without any luck, for though they were not afraid they always managed to slip out of my grasp. I was so disappointed not to have caught even one to take home with me! The hunters used to go to Slaughter House Lake for duck-shooting, and many of them would get a big bag of ducks. Some that come to mind—Lawrence McEwen, William Oliver, Howard Case, and Harry Withers. Once Harry and Ernie went to Milk River Ridge, to a chain of little lakes where the duck-hunting was always extra good. They had a team and democrat. They took grub, bed, camping equipment, and Harry's little black dog. It took the best part of a day to get there. They made camp, fed the horses, cooked a good supper, and had a long lazy hour with their pipes and tobacco before turning in for a good night's rest. About three o'clock in the morning they heard a clattering among the greasy pans that were piled around the camp stove in the corner of the tent. Harry, half-awake and still drowsy, spoke to his dog, "Sic 'em!" The dog sprang to the attack. Dog and visitor mixed, and it was indeed a bad-smelling mixture, for the visitor was a skunk. Both men were wide awake by this time. They couldn't stay in the tent. Their clothing was so saturated with the smell that the horses were afraid of them. They wouldn't let them get near enough to feed them. For the men there was nothing left fit to eat except some canned stuff, and they had to eat it in the open. Their pipes and tobacco were tainted too, so they could not smoke. The only thing left was to start back home, and that without a single shot being fired. They were indeed a sorry-looking pair when they got back to town—half-famished, no tobacco, and no ducks. They couldn't even go inside their own homes till they had changed their clothes. Sadly they buried everything in the ground, hoping for the best in a few days.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FLOOD, FIRE, AND BEREAVEMENT

THESE THREE are not necessarily in order of time, nor are they in any way related to each other. They were simply outstanding events of the last two years I lived in Lethbridge, before I moved out with Ernie to his ranch on the north side of the Belly River. As long as I lived in Lethbridge I was attending school, and on weekends and holidays I was helping Ernie look after his cattle and horses. His cattle herd of some seventy-five head pastured on the Six Mile Coulee. His herd of horses, about fifty in number, roamed the whole countryside, as did everybody else's horses. At that time these horses were of little value, for it was before the days of the homesteader.

As I passed by the Tiffin farm on the west side at noon one day I caught sight of a man with a large bunch of horses. He had stopped to eat by a fence corner, using it to hold the horses while he cooked a meal. Another man with light wagon, tent, and food provisions was with him. I rode up to see what I could, and when they saw me they asked me to stop and eat. (Such hospitality was a custom of those times). They had an open fire and had dug a hole in the ground before they made it, piling the dirt all around. They had raised the tent and tied back the flap. I went to hobble my horse, and they were busy getting their meal ready. Suddenly I heard a loud shout. I looked around and saw the fire had caught the loosened tent flap. Soon the grass around was on fire, and with my saddle blanket I tried to help put it out. But we were not able to control it, and it soon caught into the edge of a field of wheat almost ready for harvest. It made a very hot fire there, and burned a large V-shaped patch of the field before two or three neighbours arrived in a hurry. They ploughed enough furrows to put it out at length. However,

at the starting point of the fire beside the tent, a box of Royal Crown soap was still blazing merrily after the main fire was quenched; a sight to remember.

I remember we had some very heavy rains in 1900, but they were as nothing compared to the flood of 1901 when the traffic bridge went out. It was at the height of the flood that my Aunt Jessie died. She was my mother's sister, a young woman about twenty-five. The two unmarried sisters, Jessie and Ruby Coe, lived at home with their parents and brother Ernie. They were both in the dressmaking business and very clever with the needle. Jessie's death was very sudden, following an attack of measles, which were then prevalent among children and adults alike. Although she had been in fairly good health before, the doctor who treated her could hold out no hope of recovery once complications had set in. The first break in the family since coming to Canada, it was a great shock to my grandparents, and to us all. It rained hard the day of her funeral in Lethbridge.

It was just a day or two before that we watched the traffic bridge go out. In all my young life I had never seen anything that looked so wild and terrible as the river in flood, as it rose and rose. There had been long days of steady rain; the June snow was melting in the mountains; all the streams above were pouring their water down into the Belly River. The word went around that the river had risen to twenty-two feet above high water mark. In the meantime no one was prepared for anything like that. Many ranchers still had their homes on the river-bottom in the shade of the cottonwoods, and out of the strong winds of the high prairie. With a little boat handy they crossed the river whenever they wished. The Indians, too, liked to camp along coulees leading to the river. At first it was just the bottom-lands that were covered, and many a family had to be taken out by boat when the water reached the doors and windows. Then the houses with all their furniture were swept down the river. One of our friends, Bob Todd, lived with his wife and family on the river bottom near the pump-house. He had to move out of his shack in a hurry before it was carried away. At length a big house coming down-stream struck the wooden traffic bridge, already weakened by the battering of swirling currents. It took out the whole bridge, house and bridge going down-

stream together. Along both sides the river banks were strewn with all kinds of farm machinery and household furniture half-buried in fallen trees, shifting sand-bars, and every kind of debris. As the river swept eastward by the Cameron, numberless things such as wagons, beds, pots, pans, pictures, tea kettles, and parlour decorations were reported along the banks. Even a player-piano, then a very new and prized possession, was found among the wreckage.

Jim Fuller lived in a house considerably higher than most along the river bank, which was very lucky for him. When he went out to see what he could rescue or salvage, he saved a little pig. When he told the story of how a black cat came riding down the river on a shingle, he neglected to mention that part of a roof was attached to the shingle. It made quite a story to tell his friends. Strangely enough, he suffered what might have been a fatal mishap nearly a year after the flood, but due directly to it. While he was riding among the sand-piles and debris on the Circle Bottom at the junction of the Belly and Little Bow he happened to see something shining. As it was half-hidden he could not see it clearly, so jumped off his horse and reached out to pick it up. Suddenly he felt a sharp stab of pain, and drew back his hand to see the cause. There was a large rattlesnake hanging to his thumb. At first he did not realise that it could not let go as long as he was holding it in the air. But quickly he lowered its weight to the ground, and was free immediately. Instantly he put his thumb into his mouth, sucking as hard as he could to draw the poison out. He then jumped on his horse, thumb still in mouth, and raced to his little boat on the river bank. He swam his horse across behind the boat, jumped on horseback once more and rode to the doctor's door in Lethbridge. When he took his thumb out of his mouth to tell the doctor what had happened the doctor looked at the thumb and said, "You'll be all right, you've sucked all the poison out of the wound!" And so it proved to be. Jim suffered no bad after-effects. Jim was a grand "out-of-doors" man; a man of much skill and ability. I remember seeing him rope a wolf out at Fuller's Lake in 1904 after we had moved to the ranch, and he dragged the creature till it was dead.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEW SURROUNDINGS

BY NOW the open range for cattle around Lethbridge was dwindling fast. Ernie, on his visits to the Circle at the mouth of the Little Bow and to the Fullers, was impressed by the good springs of water and the quantity of prairie grass on the north side of the Belly River. Along with that, several of his Lethbridge friends had already taken up land there. Jim Fuller had taken a quarter close to the river. Bill Oliver had holdings towards the mouth of the Little Bow. Tom Nolan had already located on Section 36, along with his brother-in-law Tom McNabb, when Ernie filed on the north-east quarter of Section 35, -10, -20, west of the Fourth. At the same time my mother filed on the north-west quarter of the same section, and Harry Cockle on the south-east quarter. Ernie's quarter was about one and one-half miles from the Fuller quarter. Tom Nolan had already taken up residence on his land, and Tom McNabb, still holding a position as master mechanic in Lethbridge, built his house close to the river and started a fine fruit orchard on the river bottom as a hobby. The Nolan house had also been built close to the river, and Mrs. Nolan and family had moved out from Lethbridge.

In the fall of 1902 Ernie checked with the lumberman in Lethbridge and bought enough lumber to put up a shack, twenty by twelve, on his homestead. He loaded the lumber on his draying-wagon and started out on the long road across the traffic bridge and along the old I. G. Baker trail through Twelve Mile and Picture Butte. That was the trail used by wagons going to the Circle Ranch. I was now a boy of fourteen and Ernie took me along with him. On Twelve Mile coulee two quarters side by side had been taken by Adam Link and Robert Nimmons. There was no habitation of any kind at Picture Butte,



but the butte itself, rising high above the surrounding prairie and a stagnant slough, was a very notable hilltop. Near its top many Indian pictures, patterns, and signs were laid out with small stones. For this reason the early settlers called it Picture Butte. For a similar reason Sundial Butte on the Little Bow got its name from an easily recognisable sundial located there. Indeed, this picturesque title was carried over and given to one of two brothers from the United States who settled there—Sundial Williams.

As no one lived close to our new homestead, a stranger might perhaps wonder where we would stay while building. But our good friends, the Fullers, would not hear of us living out in the open. So we stayed with them and had our meals there. Although my grandfather Coe in Lethbridge was still smart, he did not come out with us. (He had regular duties there as

janitor of the old Central School, as well as demands for his veterinary skill. So I helped Ernie in building the shack. I didn't know much about carpenter work or anything of the kind, but Ernie was real handy with saw, hammer, and axe. I don't remember how long it took to put up the frame and board it in, roof and all. Then we boarded up the windows and went back to Lethbridge for the winter. Ernie continued with his draying business, and I went back to school. In the spring of 1903 when the days got long and warm, Ernie and I went back to the homestead. This time we brought out a stove, a bed, a few chairs, pots and pans; all the things we needed most for "baching". We brought rolls of building-paper and tar-paper, and shingled the roof. We fenced in a pasture for our milk-cow and saddle horses. (There were no quarters fenced in at that time). Now that we had things fixed up so we could live on the homestead we went back to town for our saddle-horses. Then we gathered up our cattle—about seventy-five as I remember. We took a different and shorter trail this time, driving the stock in a north-easterly direction. We stopped for dinner at Eight-Mile Lake. As long as I live I can never forget how lush, green, and beautiful was the country around. We crossed some C.P.R. lands. There was no bridge across the Belly River and we planned on using Nolan's Ford for our crossing. This did not prove difficult as Mr. Nolan himself was on hand to give us some pointers on getting the stock across.

It wasn't too long after that when that whole green-grassed countryside south of the river was swept by a disastrous fire that started at Royal View Mine and was carried by a southwest wind across the fifty-foot ditch north of Coaldale and as far as Chin Coulee. Sam Brady's stacks of wild hay went up in the blaze too, although they were well protected by fireguards on the C.P.R. land where he was living at that time. He had taken special care to protect himself by putting in these fireguards when he stacked the hay.

Although I had not finished my high school course I did not attend school any more, and I cannot truthfully say that I had any regrets on that score. Not that I had ever found my school work difficult or distasteful; not that I did not like my teachers. Simply that I looked forward with great eagerness to the change

and adventure I was sure was awaiting me in this, our new home. And I can truly say I never found life dull in the years we "bached" there. The size of our "ranch" at that time was threequarters of a section, for Mother's and Harry's quarters were under the same management, and operated as a single holding.

My first experience with rattlesnakes at close quarters was in the Spring of 1903, the very first night Ernie and I spent in the newly-built shack. We had been busy outdoors all day and did not get home till after dark. The shack was not banked and still stood on wooden blocks, with a wooden box for a doorstep. Ernie started to cook fried bacon for supper and, after parboiling it, carried the pan over to the door to throw the used liquid outside. Just then came a startling "whir-r-r-r" right under his feet. He gave one leap and landed out on the ground. But it was too dark to see where the startled snake had gone. Likely he was as much surprised as we were at being disturbed after crawling under the shack when all was quiet and no one around. As far as I know we never had a glimpse of him around again.

We soon had our "home pasture" fenced, a barn made under the side of a bank, and other small buildings put up. Then we gathered some of our horses, which all this time were wandering far and wide on the south side of the river. After we brought them across I started to break in a few more saddle-horses. Ernie usually left that work to me as I was very anxious to try my hand at it. I had asked him particularly for this chance as I had already watched and helped a lot, and felt I would really like it. I started halter-breaking, getting them used to the feel of a saddle and a man on their backs. I found the work very satisfying and took to it readily—spills and all. I don't want to confuse these horses I broke with farmyard colts that are used to having people around from the time they were born. The horses I worked on were altogether wild, never having a strap on them till I started to halter-break them. And I was indeed happy when I found I could stay on the "hurricane-deck" of one of these broncs with the best of them. By this time I was much in demand for breaking in horses for other ranchers around, as well as for homesteaders who came in a little later.

George Arrowsmith showed me a smart trick that he had once learned from a cowpuncher. He told me it might save my life some day, and it was not too long before it did. George, who had once been a policeman and our neighbour in Lethbridge, had moved to the Cameron Ranch and was looking after the Cameron interests. In those days of scarce neighbours we saw him quite often. Beside the few I have mentioned to date there was Joe Lemar, Phil Walline, and Walter Whitney. We were riding saddle-pony all the time just to keep track of our own stock. Every day I rode around the cattle to see there was no trouble among them. And I must not forget a famous rider and roper of that day, well known far and wide. That was Baldy Buck, a half-breed Indian, who was foreman at the Circle Ranch.

We had lots of good hunting and fishing in those days. I'd catch a few grasshoppers and with my willow pole, hook and line, I'd go to some backwater in the river close by. If the weather happened to be right, a half-dozen gold-eyes before long. Or we could take a shotgun and go around the cherry brush on the hillsides, and we were sure to get two or three prairie chicken any time. Antelope were plentiful and easy to shoot. We never lacked for meat as we always killed a beef of our own in the fall. And the round-up wagons of the ranchers were more than generous as they passed by, for they always had front-quarters to give away. They had no use for the front-quarters as the cowboys would eat only the hind-quarters.

When Sam Brady first left Lethbridge he "ranch" on the south side of the Belly River, about where the Nolan bridge was afterwards put in. He had been a baker, but now he bought cows from friends in the Big Bend and Lethbridge district. He also built himself a shack and a barn on his new location. All the time he had lived in the city he had bought milk for himself and his family. So to him it seemed plumb wasteful not to have a milk-cow when he had cattle around him. He soon picked the likeliest one of his wild bunch and started to "gentle" her for a milk-cow. Somehow he got her inside the small barn, with her calf in a stall close by. Then he tied her leg to a post in the back of the barn, and felt quite safe in sitting down to milk her. But this proved very unsatisfactory, for she was of a

wild fighting strain. She was an adept and unerring kicker and resolutely refused to give down her milk. Still Sam persevered, and at last was beginning to think he was getting results at a time when I went across the river to see him. While he was milking I happened to see a coyote that was coming away from feeding on a dead calf. The coyote was just up a small coulee close by. I told Sam and he told me to take a shot at him. He sent me up to the shack for his "buffalo gun". This gun was an old model Winchester (a 45-90) loaded with black powder shells. When I reached the barn the door was closed and everything was quiet. I stood still a moment wondering where the coyote had gone. When I caught sight of him slinking away from the carcass I forgot everything else in my excitement. I braced myself against the barn and pulled the trigger. The gun sounded like a small cannon, but the noise inside the barn was just as bad. Both Sam and the pail of milk had been upset. After hearing some of the language Sam was using, I did not stop to investigate. Then I saw that the coyote, although down was not dead, and was doing its best to get up and away. As I ran I shouted to Sam, "Quick! Bring a club! The coyote's not dead!" He came running with part of an old pitchfork handle. The coyote had three broken legs, but was game enough to snarl and fight us when we closed in on him. By the time Sam had killed it he seemed to have forgotten about the spilled milk. "Well, well, well!" he kept saying, quite surprised at my luck.

Trying to break in a milk-cow did not last long, as he was called away on a business trip. His oldest son came to stay at the place and I stayed with him for company. We were supposed to keep on milking the cow, but it was too much trouble and we let the calf do the milking. It wasn't long before we turned cow and calf out with the rest of the herd.

While Sam was living on the south side of the river he and I shared another experience we did not soon forget. It was spring-time and the ice on the Belly River had begun to break up. The ice had melted away from the shore banks for a distance of thirty or forty feet.

Our neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Nolan, had an invalid son who was now lying at the point of death. As a small child

he had received a sudden and terrible fright, and had never recovered from its effects. Through the years, while he was growing up, he became worse instead of better. It was now only a matter of time; as his father watched beside him night and day till he was pretty well exhausted. I often stayed with him for company, but one night he felt he needed an older man with him and asked me if I thought I could go across the river and get Sam. I knew the ice was none too good, but I thought I could manage it as I was crossing quite often. I thought it might be quite safe for us if we were careful, so I started out to go across. I rode out in the water along the shore to a depth of around three feet, knowing the ice in the middle of the stream was strong.

But I soon found that my pony, though strong and sensible, would not make any attempt to jump on the ice in the middle of the river. I got off his back and gingerly felt of the ice thickness. I found it carried me well so I tied my lariat rope to the bridle reins. That was in case the horse went through the ice; I didn't want to be too near him. At last I managed to lead him up on the ice. When I was pretty well across I went back, put up my rope, and found a good landing-place on the far side. When I reached Sam's place I told him of our neighbour's plight, and he was more than ready to help out. But I hadn't said a thing about the condition of the ice. To say he got a bad shock when he saw it would be putting it very mildly. "No use killing two men because one man is dying!" was his first reaction to the dilemma. However, he stood on the bank considering what he should do, and watched me start back across the ice. Apparently I was getting across safely, so he consented to take the plunge. We both got to the other side without any trouble. His arrival at the Nolan home was a great relief to the exhausted parents.

Some time after Ernie and I got nicely settled on the ranch, Sam decided he would file on a homestead north of the river. His location was about three miles north-east of Picture Butte. It was a fine fertile country, fairly level, and was early given the name of Coyote Flats, perhaps on account of the great number of coyotes to be seen around. Ernie and I helped him find the corner mounds of his quarter, and we had quite a

time doing it. A few of the tin location squares that had been put over the iron pins were still there. What we had to do was find one of them. Then with a piece of cloth wired to the spoke of a wagon wheel we started from a known mound and counted the revolutions needed for a half-mile. We drove the right distance in the general direction called for, keeping a close watch right and left till we discovered the next mound. It took quite a while, but at last we found them all.

CHAPTER NINE

NO DULL MOMENTS

I GOT one of the worst frights of my young life not long after we moved out to the ranch, and at a time I was all alone. A particularly brutal murder had taken place near Calgary a short time before, and it was commonly reported that the murderer was headed for the American border. This was bad news for isolated homesteaders, who felt that a man who had killed once would have nothing to lose by killing again to avoid capture. One morning, when Ernie had gone to Lethbridge and while I was doing some chores about the buildings, I saw a man coming towards the house afoot. A man afoot was a most unusual sight. A cowpuncher would walk any distance to pick up his pony before he would go afoot, even for a short distance. Then and there I decided to hit for the barn as being a safer place than the house. Then I remembered our red setter had dug quite a hole in the bottom of the hay-stack. I decided that would be a still better place. Very quietly I made my way there, got in and pulled some loose hay in after me. All this before the stranger arrived and should start searching around. When he came up to the house the red setter barked furiously. He knocked at the door, then tried it. Finding it unlocked he opened it and walked in. Soon he came out and started for the barn. I thought of my horse and saddle. Probably that was what he was after. If it was, I wasn't going to try and stop him. The dog was getting more excited than ever, and as they neared my hiding place I could hear him talking to the dog. At once I recognised the Scotch "burr" of his voice and knew him to be one of my neighbours. He went on to the barn and I quickly came out of hiding and went to the barn door. I met him just as he came out and he asked me where I had been. I told him I was "just

around back of the hay-stack." He would have had a good laugh if he had known the exact truth. Then he told me he had walked nearly all the way from the CY ranch as his horse had played out. I took him into the house and cooked him a meal. His name was Bob Todd, and he described his plight this way: "My heart is tir-r-ed, and my feet are sor-re." He walked on to the nearest ranch after supper, and stayed the night there.

I have vivid memories of a real bad blizzard that hit us the first fall we stayed out on the ranch. It lasted for a couple of days. I was caught on Horse-Shoe Bottom south of Diamond City, and stayed at Alf Waton's till the storm was over. Alf's father had lived in Lethbridge where he looked after the town herd, but now had moved out to a ranch in the country. His house was partly sod, being built up against a bank which in turn served as part of the walls of the house. There were ever so many mice around, and I remember one disturbed me by running over me in the middle of the night. I made a good catch and threw it away into the darkness as hard as I could. In the morning Mr. Watson said, "Guess what? A mouse was drowned in the barrel of pickled meat last night!" He never knew I was the one who had thrown the mouse.

One of the great problems of those days was crossing rivers. There were almost no bridges and few ferries, while on the other hand land travelling was as easy perhaps as anywhere in the world. Trails were easy to make and easy to follow. In the winter ferries were laid up and ice was the solution, but great care was needed to make sure the ice was safe. In high water, as well as in low water, ferry landings were not easy. Even if ice were good it might be "glib" or slippery. A good teamster would have to sand a trail before his horses wherever he wanted to cross. If the ice happened to be thin he would try to cross in the early morning before any melting should take place. Or a man might lead one horse across, come back and lead the other across, after that push his wagon across. Sometimes the teamster would lay planks ahead for the wagon wheels—two being laid in front of two all the way across. A rather surprising fact was that wild stock could be taken over quite easily on a ferry boat. In my experience they never tried to jump over the single rope

that was strung across the end of the ferry. Of course, large herds were best "swum" over at a good swimming place. Horses gave no trouble at all unless small colts were with them. With cattle there was often trouble getting them started into the water, as cows do not take kindly to deep water. We found it easiest to take over only a few at a time. If the herd was kept from water for twenty-four hours before, it made it much easier. Then a bunch of riders could take a small number, say from twelve to twenty, down to the fording place. They would eagerly step in, drinking as they went, while the riders kept pushing them further and further till they were closer to the opposite shore. It was easier then for them to keep on going than to turn back. This would be repeated until there would be more and more on the other side. The more that crossed the easier it would be to get the rest of the herd across. Of course, there were some dangers in this for the cowboys, as the quicksands in the rivers shifted from time to time. Many cow-men believed that Milk River was particularly bad in that respect.

I remember when Frank Smoot, an A-1 cowboy and a particularly strong swimmer, was drowned while helping cross a herd above the Circle Ranch. Jack Chamberlin's saddle-horse got into trouble in a quicksand, and Frank went to help him. But something happened,—I do not know if his horse kicked him in the struggle. At any rate he went down and disappeared. Both horses freed themselves, and Jack came out clinging to his horse's tail. Nothing could be seen of Frank except his hat which floated away. Some months later his body was found down river near Taber, and was identified by his spurs. Then, too, fords were not always reliable as to depth. A man could ride across in the morning with water at normal depth, and find it much higher at night due to sudden rains or cloudbursts in the mountains. For this reason "swimming horses" (horses particularly good in deep water), were much in demand.

One day Ernie, with his team and wagon, was caught in one of these sudden rises of the Belly River. The team was drowned, but the wagon box kept afloat, which was lucky for Ernie, who could not swim. The box floated about a mile down river before it stranded on the shore and he was able to reach dry land. Many

ranchers kept a small boat on hand as a safer and more convenient way of crossing, with their saddle-horses swimming easily behind.

I remember a small punt ferry that used to go back and forth between Lethbridge and Diamond City. I came down to the ferry one morning and saw that the young ferryman in charge was terribly excited. He told us that his one passenger, a miner, had just jumped overboard and drowned himself. We looked for the body but could see nothing. We notified the police who a few days later found it some miles down the river.

Another thing we had to reckon with were sudden prairie fires. The high winds along with the unlimited sweep of dry prairie grass made them catastrophes very much to be dreaded. The worst one I remember was during the first year we stayed out at the ranch. The fire started near Claresholm and burned itself out at the mouth of the Little Bow. With a south-west wind it hit the Little Bow country at Sundial Butte. Then a sudden change of wind to the north drove the blazing wall of fire south through Coyote Flats to the Belly River. Then another shift in the wind carried the flames to the Circle Ranch where their barns and supply of hay were all destroyed. Wild life such as rabbits and antelope were pretty well exterminated. They ran before the flames but were either burned or smothered. We, too, lost all our feed and had to put our cattle across the river that winter for their pasturage.

Of course, during this time the few homesteaders and the ranchers were doing their best to protect themselves by ploughing fireguards. When fire threatened any spot they were out in force with their walking-ploughs and wet gunny-sacks. In time of emergency they sometimes killed a "critter". Then splitting it open, they dragged it swiftly across the side fires, thus smothering them. But only a change in the wind or a stream of water could stop the main fire.

Homesteaders were beginning to come in—first in small numbers, but more with each succeeding year. With the likelihood that the land would be quickly grabbed up, my Grandfather Coe and my Aunt Ruby each filed on a quarter adjoining those we had, and just across the road allowance north of us. Early well-remembered neighbours in Sundial were the Williams

brothers: "Sundial", who later moved to Red Deer, and John, a permanent resident.

There is an island in the Belly River, a mile or two above the Nolan Bridge, that has been known locally as Dead Man's Island ever since a certain winter. The spring before Jim Fuller was out looking for a lost colt and saw a dark object on one end of the small island, but he was not able to go and see as the river was then too high. He had almost forgotten the matter when, one day in December, he saw a coyote leaving the same spot. The river was frozen over and he rode across to see what he could find. He found the body of a man, badly decomposed and with some of the limbs scattered about. Jim knew we were going to Lethbridge for Christmas inside a few days and asked us to let the police there know about the matter. As the man had been dead so long they decided not to go out till after Christmas, and asked to accompany us on our trip back so that they would know where to go. They were bringing with them a rough box in which to take the remains back to Lethbridge. Now it happened that they had only a small buckboard, whereas we had a wagon suitable for bringing out our supply of groceries. So they asked us if we would take the rough box and they would bring out our groceries. But at the last minute they decided they had no room for the groceries either, and in the end we had to put them inside the box to bring them out. One really superstitious man in the party was much bothered about this, saying, "I'd never eat again if I had to eat food that had been in a coffin!" I didn't like the idea too well either, but I guess it didn't do the food any harm if one did not think of it while eating. We all had dinner at Fuller's, and then a jury from the few men present was empanelled for an inquest. I was pretty young for jury duty, but the coroner and police were not able to pick and choose.

Dr. De Vebber was the coroner and said he must have been a man about thirty-five or forty. I had thought he was very old as his hair was white, but the doctor turned over the head to show brown hair on the under side. The skin was stretched so tightly over the bones that the body looked hardly human—more like some animal long since dead. One of the legs had been carried some distance away, probably by coyotes. The body was

dressed in a flannel shirt, blue overalls, woollen socks, and rough boots. He had neither hat nor coat. No marks of violence could be seen. The jury brought in a verdict of death by accidental drowning. They had no way of identifying him, so they put the remains in the coffin and decided to bury him there. Then the police would advertise his description in case anyone could claim him and want to have him buried elsewhere. Now the hardest task yet was ahead of the police. That was to dig a grave in the hard-frozen ground. They found it well nigh impossible, and were at their wits' end as to what they should do. Jim Fuller pointed out to them an excavation ready to hand in the shape of a coyote's den. And so with little ceremony except a draught of liquid refreshment to warm them after their chilly session out-of-doors, the remains of the unknown were interred in the coyote's den, and Dead Man's Island came by its name. To the best of my knowledge the man was never identified.

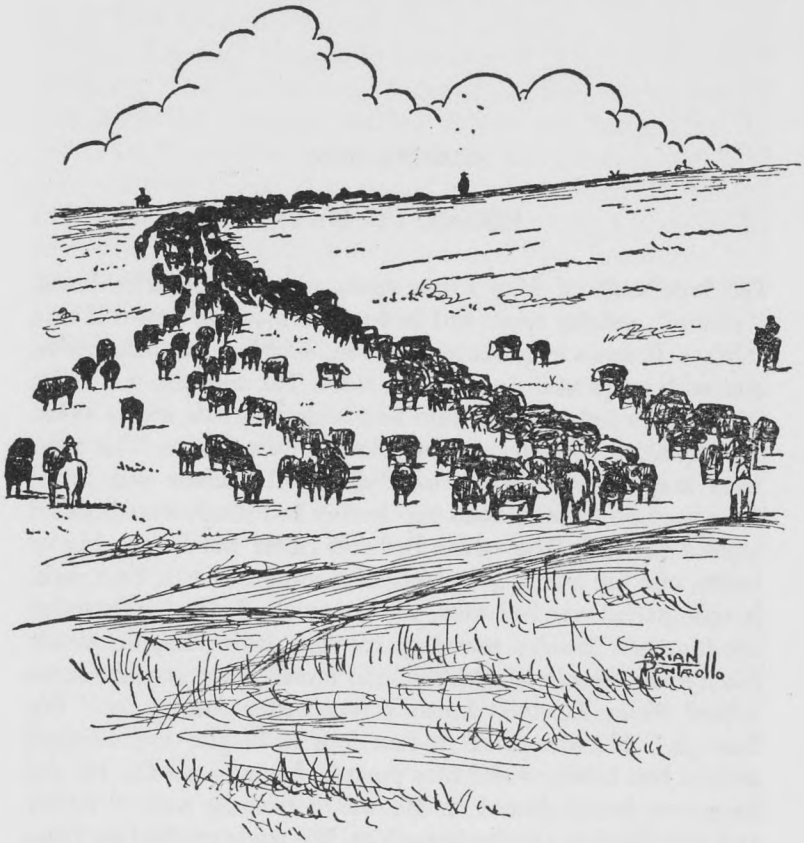
In 1904 I had a chance to go out on my first round-up, which was, in my book, the most interesting thing that could have happened to me. I would be working for the Little Bow Lower Pool. W. S. (Billy) Hill, then our closest neighbour, was round-up foreman for this, while Mr. Dawson was in charge of the Upper Pool. Mr. Hill had come from Wyoming and was thoroughly experienced in the cattle business. He had a steady hired man by the name of George MacMillan, who had come with his cattle from Powder River. Mr. Hill, seeing me out with Ernie, and always busy breaking horses, halter-breaking colts, riding horses, and the like, asked Ernie if I would not like to go out on round-up and "day wrangle" the saddle-horses. He would give me forty dollars a month, which was top wages for a cow-hand then. For my part I was only too glad to accept, as the idea of a cowboy's life had always held a great attraction for me, and soon I was deep in preparations for the great event coming up.

CHAPTER TEN

ROUND-UP DAYS

ON THE tenth of May I was ready to start out, with horse, "chaps", saddle, spur, and bed-roll. I used my bed-roll as a suitcase. It was a tarp, six by fourteen, doubled over lengthwise, and with snaps and rings on the sides. The mattress was light, and I mean light—about two feet wide and two inches thick. The blankets, pillow, and my clothes were inside. The sides were snapped over in the middle, and the whole was rolled from the head down. Then two leather bed-straps were buckled around the roll. The whole bed-roll better not be too big or heavy, else the owner got plenty of ribbing about it. Two pack-horses carried our bed-rolls, as there were four of us starting out together. Besides round-up foreman Billy Hill, his steady hired man, George MacMillan, and myself there was a mulatto named Felix Luttrell. Luttrell was better known as "Big Enough". He was about six-foot four in height, and weighed around two hundred and fifty pounds, but was not fat. He did have very broad shoulders. He was a friendly sort of fellow and well liked by all who knew him. We made up the four from our part of the country who were joining the Little Bow Lower Pool. Big Enough was always ready to give any of the rest of the fellows a hand, which is one reason why I remember the few months he spent with us before he suddenly disappeared, never to return to our round-up.

Our first meeting place was at the Urch and Patterson ranch, called the Double Bracket on account of the shape of the owners' brand. It was nearly twenty-five miles from where we set out. Part of the country we travelled over was level or undulating prairie. After that, as we neared the Little Bow, it became rough, rocky, and hilly. When we got to the Little Bow at the mouth of Wolf Coulee we found the river very high; in



fact it was in flood. And from a narrow stream that one can almost cross dry-shod most of the year it had become a fearsome-looking torrent. The current looked like the back of an angry cat, high in the middle with all the drift going down the centre. It must have been twelve to fifteen feet deep, and from sixty to seventy feet wide.

We looked at it quite a while and decided the only thing we could do was to swim straight across. I wasn't a bit pleased with the idea, till Mac jumped his horse in and swam across. Big Enough knew that his horse wouldn't swim, so he doubled up with Billy Hill on his big sorrel. I was sure they would be swamped. As they jumped in they told me to follow.

(I had already received lots of good advice from them as to what I should do and what I should not do when I was swimming a horse across the river). My little bay took to the water without any trouble. He waded out about six or seven feet, then seemed to float while the water came up around my waist. They warned me just to hang on and not try to use my bridle to steer him; if I tried to turn him I would likely turn him over in the water. I followed their directions and we got across safe and sound, but had been carried quite a bit downstream by the current. By now I was thoroughly wet, and was beginning to think a cowboy's life could be pretty grim. Here I was, a youngster thirty miles from home, thoroughly wet up to the waist, and with my bed and all my clothing wet, while the evening already was becoming real chilly. Lucky for us we were only a short distance from the round-up camp. And close by was the Double Bracket ranch house where they offered us dry beds, and gave us a place by the fire to dry our clothes.

Most of the other cow-men and cowboys, expected, had already arrived. These were the ranch owners, our cook named Mr. Dollarhide, and the round-up foremen. The other wrangler besides myself was Jack Adair, who had lost one leg while breaking remounts for the Canadian Army at Regina, the time of the Boer War. I herded the saddle-horses by day, and Jack looked after them by night. My work was very light at first, for we had a pasture for the saddle-horses while at the Double Bracket. Along with herding the horses it was my duty to keep the cook supplied with wood and with water from the slough. The Urch and Patterson ranch was right at the mouth of Snake Valley, and close by were two tents and a small bunch of horses.

It soon began to rain and rained steady for almost two weeks. We combed the country around Wolf Coulee, around Urch and Patterson's, around Lake MacGregor, up the Little Bow and down as far as the Belly River. Our cook must have been good, for our meals tasted extra good. We had beef, potatoes, gravy, pie, pudding, and coffee. We were up at 4.30 in the morning and had breakfast at 5.30. My herding job was easy while we had the pasture, but later it was much harder when all the boys arrived with their "strings" or bunches of saddle-ponies. Probably I had about one hundred and twenty to look after

when they all got there. Each string liked to go off and graze by themselves, and that meant a lot of work in keeping them all together. Often when we were moving camp I needed a man to help me keep them from heading off in different directions. I had a bay saddle pony in my string that had a bad habit of pulling away whenever I got off his back. I was having a lot of misery with him when Big Enough offered to help me break him of this habit. He rode him about two days and had him well cured, simply by giving him a chance to pull away then upsetting him hard. Using all his strength and skill he brought him up suddenly and threw him. At another time Big Enough had a bad experience which caused him painful injuries for the time being. Billy Hill felt he needed another good saddle-horse for Felix and he sent him home for a good horse that was doing nothing. The horse was well broken as a cow-horse but he was a bad buckner. However, Mr. Hill felt that a good rider like Felix would have no difficulty with him. But the horse had different ideas and he started to buck one chilly morning when we were at Wolf Coulee. He began to buck right on the banks of the steep coulee, and bucked to the bottom, perhaps a hundred feet. Felix rode him all the way but he was so stiff and sore that he rode the bed-wagon for a day or two. When July came Felix disappeared overnight. When we got up around 5 a.m. he was gone, and we never saw or heard of him again. However, we did learn that the police had been around making inquiries about him not long before.

In moving camp we pulled down the tents and loaded all the beds in the bed-wagon, as well as putting our firewood in it. One wagon was called the cook-wagon and everything that had to do with the cooking was carried there. The cook drove the cook-wagon and the night-herder drove the bed-wagon. There were times when we covered the country fast and might move camp twice a day, usually after breakfast and after dinner. The cook-wagon was left at the door of the cook-tent, and a big canvas was spread over the wagon and the front of the tent. The bed-wagon on the other hand was used as an anchor against which to fasten the horse corral. This corral was used for catching saddle-ponies, and was made of a single inch-rope stretched in a diamond shape, and about three feet off the ground. It was

stretched from the front and back wheels of the bed-wagon on one side. Then the side ropes were stretched in a diamond shape on each side, around stout pegs driven into the ground. A gate of single rope at the end opposite the bed-wagon was held open by one of the men while the horses were being driven in. A horse could then be easily caught by a rider who sometimes needed a fresh one two or three times a day. My own string of saddle-horses for herding numbered about ten, each outfit supplying one horse. And I had quite a time keeping them all gentle enough to ride. Still, I found my work very interesting, and as we were continually changing our camp grounds I saw a lot of new country. In moving we were always led by a rider who knew just where our next camping ground was to be. There were four horses on the bed-wagon and four on the cook-wagon. I drove the saddle-horses. My saddle-horses were all geldings, and I looked after them from 5 a.m. till 5 p.m. when the night-herder came on. In addition to getting the wood and water (often the latter was from a slough as I have said), I helped make camp, break camp, set up tents and stove, and cover the cook-wagon with the canvas. Each foreman gave instructions to his men to gather all cattle in that area to a good level central point. The cowboys would hold these bunched up while two or three riders would separate or "cut out" the cattle they wanted. These were then put with the main herd they were gathering as they went along—this main herd being their own cattle. As his herd steadily grew bigger two men were allotted to watch them from breakfast till dinner, and two more from dinner till supper. Two at a time were given the job of "night-guarding" the herd from six in the evening till the morning, and these men guarded for a two-hour period only—a two-hour watch. They used to call the work of the first night-guard "singing the herd to sleep," for the cattle usually lay down on the bed-ground not to move again till daylight.

Branding was done in the open. One man caught a calf by the hind leg and pulled him up to the branding fire. Then "raslers" in pairs flopped the calf over. One held a hind foot against the ham and pulled the other leg straight out. The other man held a front leg and knelt on the neck and shoulders while the branding was being done. I had learned another way

of handling a calf from a man from Wyoming. When he first brought up a calf to me by the neck he expected me to throw him. But I was stumped. Another man who had seen this method before worked down the rope and, reaching over, caught the calf by the opposite flank. "Flanking" was what they called it. Soon I learned to do that too. And somewhere along the way, I had learned the hard way, with many a tumble, how to "bulldoze" a colt. That meant working carefully along the rope around his neck until I was able to put my fingers over his ear and nose. Then with a quick twist of his neck throw him to the ground. The idea is not to get yourself kicked in the head by the colt while you are doing this.

The busiest time of the year for the cow-men and cowboys came with the rounding up of their cattle in the spring, branding their calves, and gathering up the beef cattle in the fall for shipping. Our round-up covered a lot of country after somewhat of the following pattern: we started from the Double Bracket ranch where we were camped on the north side of the river opposite Wolf Coulee with the Snake Valley opening up before us; we travelled all over the countryside working down to where the Little Bow joined the Belly River close to the Cameron buildings; we followed along the Belly River to where it joined the Bow River at the Forks, near Bow Island; and the next sweep was following the upstream of the Bow as far as Driftwood Bend. All this was well-established ranching country at that time. We kept moving farther to the north and west and criss-crossed the country around Lake MacGregor and Arrowwood, all the time moving slowly in the direction of the other Circle Ranch at Queenstown. A "rep" from the Circle had been with us from the start, on the business of trying to locate some of their strays. We went through the Thigh Hills and towards the Mosquito Creek foothill country. We followed southward along the hills as far as Willow Creek. From there we spread well eastward taking in all the Rocky Coulee country, until we reached the Big Bend near Lethbridge. That was close to the end of our round-up sweep, and from there most of the ranchers and their men with divided herds, set out for their home ranches. A little later, particularly after the hard winter of 1906-1907, our round-ups covered areas south of Lethbridge,

across to Chin, down to Verdigris Coulee, Manyberries, and Milk River, right to the American border. This was in search of cattle that had been driven south by winter blizzards.

The only real stampede I ever saw was during this round-up, and it was a pretty bad one, though it had been brought about in a very simple way. The cook was in the habit of keeping his eggs in a four-gallon can in waterglass or some salt solution. After emptying the can he used it for potato peelings and it had been thrown out on the edge of a small coulee. A quiet old cow came snuffing along, smelled the peelings and put her head into the can where it soon became stuck. Now that the cow was scared as well as blinded she started to run in the direction of the wild herd. This scared them and they all started to run with clattering hoofs. The noise soon became deafening as they ran faster and faster. Soon a wild stampede was on. Fortunately some of the boys had seen stampedes before, and they quickly began cutting into the herd with flying slickers and coats. Before long they had them divided and slowed down. But in that short time the herd had been so well scattered that it took three or four days to get them all gathered up again. In fact they were never sure they got them all as there had been between three and four thousand head in the herd.

In a coulee not far from Carmangay the boys ran into a bob-cat near our camp. A cowboy (called Swift because he was so slow), was a pretty good one with a rope. He decided to rope the cat and soon "laid it on." The cat immediately began to fight and tried to jump on the horse. The horse was thoroughly frightened and began to buck. Swift had quite a time getting the horse to straighten out and drag the cat. The horse had suffered a few claw marks and scratches, but things would have been much worse for both Swift and his horse if the bob-cat had been able to get on behind.

To balance the good things in cowboy life I must not forget the unpleasant ones. It was very unpleasant to be out herding on rainy or snowy nights. River crossings were often difficult and dangerous. And it was easy to lose money gambling, as a game of poker was always in play. I was soon cured of any yen for gambling when I lost four bits (50 cents), the very first time I sat in at a game of poker. There was a bit of social

life, like dances, now and then during the long spring days of the round-up.

When we were in the Thigh Hills country a rancher who lived not too far from camp had a very winsome and beautiful daughter. More than one of our boys was quite smitten with her. One of these called Mack considered himself a real lady-killer. One evening, after shaving and putting on a clean shirt, he told us he had caught up a young horse and was taking it out for exercise. Taking everything into consideration the rest of the boys decided there was more here than met the eye. It was likely he was going to see the young lady. We were quite sure of this when he had not arrived back by bed-time. He was still away when we got up, but while we were eating breakfast he came in, packing his saddle, and with chagrin and anger written all over his face. One of the boys ventured to ask him what was the matter—what had happened? “shut up!” was his short reply. But of course we found out all about it later. Mack’s horse had stepped into a badger hole and had become so lame that his master could not lead him, much less ride him. So he had to turn the animal loose, and never reached his destination. And it had taken him all night to carry his saddle back afoot. About a month later, when we came back that way, we found the horse had recovered enough that we were able to take him with us.

South of Arrowwood, at a place called Round Lake there were a few farmers and ranchers. While we were there invitations to a dance were sent to the boys on our outfit. So we exchanged or borrowed neckerchiefs, pants, shirts, ties—anything that would help us make the best possible appearance. Our host turned all his own stock out into the pasture to make room for our horses in the barns and corrals. The room they used for dancing was about sixteen feet square. I had never been to a dance before and was quite shy, sitting back in a corner by the cook-stove. There were three grown daughters in the home and suddenly one of them appeared before me and grabbed me. I was scared to death at the idea of getting up on the floor, but with a little help from those around I found myself pushed out there. Then the dance started, and I was pulled, pushed, and directed through the figure—whatever it

was! I didn't know what I was doing, but they kept telling me I was "doing fine." I felt that I could hardly believe that, so I didn't try it again that night. This was just one of many ranch-house dances, and in time I got to be quite a good dancer; even a good caller of old time square dance tunes, so my friends said. Often we would dance all night to a mouth-organ and a set of bones. We felt extra lucky if we had a fiddle and a piano.

It seemed that nearly every new place we stopped had something about it (or even some incident), that fixed it firmly in my memory. For instance, the foothill country on the eastern slopes of the Porcupines and west of the railroad was quite well settled. Large fertile farms were growing heavy crops of wheat, and here I first saw a six-horse outfit ploughing. Some of the boys practised shooting with their revolvers while we were there. Joe to prove some point (I don't remember what it was), opened up his bed and got out his six-shooter. He used an empty milk can to show us how good he was. Then another took up his challenge, making direct hits two times out of three. And they had many a game "shooting craps." Thus they passed their idle hours. I was watching a game one rainy day while keeping my eye on my horse-herd. Many of the idle boys had gathered around and were playing on a slicker as being the smoothest place they could find. Stakes were getting pretty high. One player "threw" and "got his number." He reached out to gather the money. Quickly a gun was pulled; "Not so fast! You took it on a tilted dice." It looked and sounded dangerous, and the hand stretched out for the money was quickly withdrawn. That was the first time I had ever seen a gun pulled in a friendly game at camp. The owner of the gun was usually a smiling, easy-going man, but he seemed to have been angered by the way the other man won. "Tilted dice" were not acceptable.

One night around midnight or later, I was awakened by the most terrifying whooping and shouting, punctuated by shots. I felt sure it must be Indians or outlaws, and panic-stricken I rose straight up in bed. But my nearest bed-fellow, older and wiser than I, pulled me down. "Lie down," he commanded, "or you'll get one of those shots in your head." When I found out he had a good idea of what was going on, I felt better. I too,

if I had been listening to some scraps of conversation that afternoon, would have understood better. A tall young half-breed, usually a very nice, peaceable fellow, one of the Urch and Patterson riders, had left the morning before for Nanton saying he wanted to buy himself some new clothes. Whether he found the clothing I do not know, but he did find a "blind pig" and filled himself with bad whisky. Some of the boys who knew of the blind pig, and how whisky affected Jimmie, were not at all surprised. In fact they expected some such racket when he got back, and quietly sneaked up on him, taking away his gun without too much trouble. He apologised handsomely for all the row he had been making: "just wanted to wake the boys up, you know!" He had already shot two holes through the walls of the bed-tent.

Many of the boys drank more or less as a matter of custom. One day four or five such gay spirits went into Fort Macleod to attend a circus. While waiting for the parade they had a few drinks and got "lit up" to the extent they lost any shyness or backwardness they had naturally. With the approach of the elephants carrying beautiful ladies on their backs, the boys quickly jumped on their horses which stood out in front of the saloon, and soon were out in front—leading the parade. They were good riders—some trick riders; and they added greatly to the attraction. It was certain that many of the onlookers thought they were part of the circus and parade. The manager was more than pleased with the added attraction and gave them free tickets to the show.

But the next morning we came very near having a tragedy in our midst. One of the boys, Panhandle Pete (I believe his right name was Sam Baird), decided to ride a bad horse known as Scarface (from having a diagonal scar across his forehead). Some of the boys gave Pete a hand in getting started, and Scarface seemed to be acting better than usual. Instead of his usual hard bucking he started to run. Soon they had disappeared behind some low trees. Before long Scarface made his appearance without any rider. The boys ran in great alarm to see what had happened. They arrived just in time to save the man's life for the horse had carried him among the trees, and his head and chin had become wedged in the crotch of a big willow.

He was trying hard to free himself but was already black in the face from hanging suspended. With dead weight on his head and throat he would soon have been past all help. As it was he suffered no ill effects except for a stiff neck.

When we moved to Pincher Creek my saddle-horses suffered from a bad accident. The river-bottoms there were covered with willows that grew to the height of eight or nine feet. One rancher had put a barbed wire fence through the willows right down to the river's edge. At noon I brought my horses down the road to the river for a drink. Something or other frightened them badly and they ran off in all directions among the willows. Many of them ran full into the barbed wire, and when I gathered them up I found that five or six had been badly cut, while several more were scratched. In fact two were so badly wire-cut we had to leave them behind.

From there we moved to the Blood Indian Reserve and camped on Bull Horn Coulee. There the heel flies began to bother the herd, and "bother" does not half express it. About four o'clock one afternoon a herd anywhere from four to five thousand head was in charge of four riders. It was fine level country for grazing, but there was no large body of water close at hand. First one cow stuck her tail up in the air and began running as if for dear life; then another, and still another, till the whole herd seemed to be running in all directions, here and there across the prairie. Far and wide they ran, and down into the coulees. They were simply out of control. As quickly as possible all the other riders who were out "on circle" or round-up, joined in the effort to gather and hold together that great body of wildly-running cattle.

Our next move was down the St. Mary's River to the site of the old stronghold, Fort Whoop-Up. There was little to see there. We moved on through the rolling hills and camped about two miles from Lethbridge, where we got a fresh supply of grub. We spent an extra day there while a wagon and some of our boys went back to Lethbridge for our night-herder. They found him in a very hilarious condition and not at all willing to leave Main Street. However we had now come to the end of our round-up except for the "return home" trip of the various ranchers and their men.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INCIDENTS AND ADVENTURES

WE WENT back as far as the Twelve Mile Corrals on the Little Bow and while there we saw at the neighbouring Circle Ranch an unforgettable incident of danger and suspense. For a few hair-raising seconds a man's life hung trembling in the balance. Chris Christensen was a "rough-string rider" who worked for the Circle. As a matter of course he rode all the meanest horses and those that were the hardest buckers. These qualities did not prevent an animal from being a good cow-horse. Often they were the very best of cow-horses, but their mean and unreliable disposition made them of very little use to ordinary riders.

That evening Chris was riding a real bad horse, but after a long hot day he seemed pretty well played out. In fact he was dragging along behind the rest and hardly lifting his feet from the ground. Carelessly he stumbled into a badger hole and, not being alert enough to recover and draw back, he stumbled to his knees and rolled over. That was the last thing Chris expected him to do, and he made no effort to free himself till it was too late. They fell together in a heap and when the horse got up Chris' right foot was wedged fast in the stirrup. Besides that the right hand stirrup was pulled over to the left side. Chris was left hanging over the horse's left side—head down, with his head and shoulders touching the ground. But he still retained a firm grip on the lines. For an instant the horse stood perfectly still, his ears twitching just a little as he tried to look back at his helpless rider. Chris remained perfectly still too, as did the other four riders with him. Well they knew that one false or startling move would spell Chris' death. Any one of them could have thrown a rope over the horse in a second,

but that likely would have been the very worst thing they could do. Nevertheless the farthest riders began smoothly and quietly to get their ropes ready for any emergency. The two nearest riders remained stock still. Chris' horse still remained motionless, while very quietly and gently he reached up with his other hand to touch the latigo, or strap that fastens on the saddle. He moved very slowly and smoothly while still keeping firm hold of the lines. The men on the left watched him in a fever of suspense. The latigo had a "lightning buckle"—impossible to unhook until Chris could get enough slack in it. The seconds dragged slowly, seeming like hours to us. Suddenly the man gave a swift twist and jerk, and the saddle was free. The horse gave one quick bound and a resounding kick. The man was lucky in that the kick landed on the saddle. He was still caught in the stirrup but safe and uninjured. In a matter of seconds one of the other riders brought back the runaway.

When I was ready to go back to the ranch I was lucky in getting the offer of a ride with our neighbour Tom Nolan who was on his way home with his team and democrat. This was quite a help to me, having my bed-roll and other belongings to take back home. We were following a prairie trail half-hidden by long grass when suddenly a bob-cat ran down the trail ahead of us. When he got far enough ahead he crawled out into the grass and lay flat. He kept repeating this performance again and again till Tom said we could get him if we just had some rocks to throw at him. I jumped out of the democrat and got some rocks the size of my fist. When we got close again Tom threw a rock. But the cat was quicker and got back into the trail again. The next time we threw, the cat ran over to a homesteader's new chicken-house and went inside. There was no roof or door to the building, and Tom said jubilantly, "Now we've got him! You get a club and stand in the door, and I'll drop a rock on him from above. Then you can get him with your club when he comes out!" Tom dropped the rock but it did not land on the cat, which came bounding out the door. I didn't get a crack at him with my short two-by-four club either, so I started to run after him. Now he took the offensive and stopped short. Then he sprang at me about shoulder high. I

threw my club at him and was luckier than I had any right to expect. I stopped him cold with a blow on the head. Otherwise it could have been very unpleasant for me to say the least, if I had missed him.

After we made sure it was really dead, Tom picked up the body and threw it into the democrat. "Better take the critter along," he said, "or folks at home will never believe that we killed a bob-cat, with our bare hands almost!" I went back to Ernie's where I still made my home with my uncle except when I was out on round-ups and the like in autumn and spring.

In the fall of 1905 I had a line-back buckskin saddle-pony, part Russian carriage horse and part cayuse. His mother had been a line-back buckskin too. Although we kept him up for chores as a "winter horse," and although we fed and watered him regularly, he was neither docile nor dependable. He was high-lifed, tough, and mean; and he travelled fast. I considered I had him trained enough to be fairly good to handle, but I had a couple of narrow escapes while riding him. One day when the ice on the river, though very slippery, was strong enough to hold us, I rode Buck down to the river. There were patches of snow all over the ice, allowing us to use unshod horses. When I got to the river I dismounted and led him from one snow patch to the next. When I got to the other side and was getting on his back again (with lots of heavy clothing to hamper me), I came to grief. I was getting on partly from the back of the saddle, back a little ways, with lines and mane in my left hand, catching saddle horn in my right, bringing left foot up and into stirrup, and springing off my right foot. Then it happened: my right foot rolled on a small rock, and my right hand slipped. There I was, down on my back, with my foot in the stirrup and the lines in my hand. I held them firm and strong so that he could not start running too fast. Then I remembered George Arrowsmith's advice: "If you get your foot caught in the stirrup, try to throw yourself over." I was thinking fast, but it takes a lot of nerve to loosen your hold on the lines. But somehow I did manage to throw my body over from lying on my back to lying face down, and then my back down once more. My foot was free from the stirrup, but I'll never know how I managed it. I guess I was just lucky. The horse had begun to

run and dragged me about two hundred yards before I was free. However I did not feel any worse for the experience even though I had to walk nearly a mile to the Nolan ranch after my horse had got away during the accident.

One evening I was out riding in the rolling hills and had a chance to do a favour for one of my old boyhood friends, Danny Hassen. It was after a rain, and the sod was very soft and water-soaked. As I topped a hill and looked down into a valley I saw a horse bucking very bad. The rider was a boy and looked to be very young. When I got near he begged me to stop him. I could see the boy was bleeding from the mouth and nose. I struck his mount several hard blows with my quirt. Then I got hold of the hackamore and pulled his head up. Then I saw the boy was Danny. He rolled off exhausted and lay on the ground, really played out. He said the horse must have been bucking ten or fifteen minutes, although it had seemed like hours to him. After resting for a few minutes he mounted again. I went along with him to see that his horse would give him no more trouble.

One extra fine October day Billy Hill, his man George, a boy named Joe, and myself went out along the Little Bow on a bull round-up. The spring before Mr. Hill had turned out twenty-two young bulls on the open range, and now he wanted to bring them home for winter feeding. We had taken along a team and wagon, tents, and beds, and planned to camp at the Sundial Ranch owned by Mr. Williams. At first we worked up the river towards Snake Valley, Joe driving the team and the rest of us riding our saddle-horses. Then Billy told Joe and me to make camp while he and George went ten miles or so up the river where they expected to see some friends. After making camp Joe said he thought he would bank the tent as it looked like snow. This we did by using some of the numberless rocks around. We picketed one pony and hobbled the others before we went to bed. We went to bed early, expecting to be up early in the morning. We woke each other in the night to listen to the raging blizzard outside. When morning came the snow was so thick we couldn't see for a distance of thirty feet. We got up and turned the saddle-pony loose from his picket. Then we wondered what we should have for breakfast. We had

nothing cooked as we had been getting our meals over a camp fire. We ducked out into the storm and got one of Mr. Williams' fence posts. We cut it up and started a fire inside the tent, but we couldn't stand the smoke. So for breakfast we ate a few biscuits left over from supper. Then we went back to bed to try and keep warm. We tried the fire again at dinner time but the smoke was so bad we had to put it out. We had some half-cooked meat and some dry bannock for dinner. Then back to bed again to keep warm. At supper time we did not even get up as our eyes were so sore from the smoke, aching badly whether we had them open or shut. The storm was still raging the next morning so we stayed in bed. Still we had to get up often enough to knock the ice off the canvas by beating on it, or the whole tent would have been torn down. About ten or eleven in the forenoon the wind died down somewhat, and Mr. Williams came wading through the snowdrifts to tell us the girls up at the house had something warm for us to eat. He said he was glad to find we were all right after such a terrible storm. We didn't waste any time wading back to the house with him—a distance of about half a mile. And I'm quite sure I never saw or tasted anything so good as that hot food, nor any place as warm and pleasant as Mr. Williams' house after spending a day, two nights, and half another day huddled half-frozen in a tent—without any food. By afternoon of that day Mr. Hill and George came back. We all stayed at Mr. Williams' ranch that night, and next morning went out to hunt for our horses. After finding them and gathering up our stuff we started for home, Mr. Hill having decided he would put off the bull round-up till we had another spell of fine weather.

CHAPTER TWELVE

STORIES OF LATER ROUND-UPS

IN THE seasons following my first experiences with a round-up came other round-ups, and I met many worthy and interesting characters. High on the list is "Missouri"—I never knew him by any other name. I met him during a round-up when he was hired in Lethbridge by the Double Bracket outfit to replace a rider that had quit. The rep had quit leaving his saddle, horses and bed behind. The new man was a perfectly "raw" cowhand and when he came was all decked out in new clothes—big hat, kerchief, leather cuffs, and high-heeled boots. But it didn't take the rest of the boys long to find out how green he was in cowboy ways. He spoke with a real Irish accent, which was in keeping with his story of having just arrived from Dublin, Ireland. The other boys were most considerate in starting him out; gave him a gentle horse, the very best available. But somehow or other he was so awkward while saddling it that the animal tried to buck off the saddle. But that didn't discourage him in the least. He was so greedy for cow-hand knowledge, so anxious to be shown everything that came up in his line of duty, that we immediately dubbed him Missouri. (To this day I cannot think of him by any other name, and I have often wondered what became of him in later life).

He certainly did not lack for courage, for that same afternoon he said he would like to ride a certain pretty sorrel, which was only half-broken. The boys couldn't dissuade him so they let him have his way. They caught the pony and saddled it. Strangely enough, the pony took to him very kindly and made no effort to unseat him. A few days later we were all riding near Chin Coulee when a sudden rain came up. Cow-men were always ready for a sudden shower and carried a slicker on the

saddle. When a storm came up they dismounted to put on these cumbersome, rustling garments. But not Missouri! While still mounted he started to untie, unfold, shake out, and don the slicker. None of the ponies were used to that, so we looked for real fireworks. But nothing happened; again Missouri was lucky.

While we were down in the Chin Coulee country I had troubles of my own. I had a bad little horse called Sunday—I don't know why unless it was because he was so mean. I never rode him if I could help it because, to tell the truth, I was afraid of him. I didn't at that time have too much skill in riding a "rough-string." The boys had taken notice that I didn't like Sunday or his ways, and so kept teasing me to ride him. At last they got my goat and in a rash moment I said, "All right! Catch him up and I'll ride him after dinner." In great glee they caught and saddled him for me, for it surely promised them great fun and excitement at the expense of someone else. They got it too for though he was not such a mighty buck, he was too mighty for me! I had to hang on to everything in sight to stay on his back at all. Bucking and running he got his head and plunged into the horse corral. He pulled it down, and what the boys didn't say wasn't worth mentioning. A lot of them had not yet caught up their saddle-horses after dinner. In the mix-up that followed either Sunday or some of the loose horses ran into the four-horse outfit being harnessed to the bed-wagon and stampeded them. The man in charge of the bed-wagon naturally blamed me and took his whip after us (I say "us" because at this point Sunday had far more control over the situation than I had). He took his whip and chased us right down into the lake. Now in truth I found out he had done me a good turn—the best possible. As soon as Sunday was in water to his knees he seemed helpless, and I could manage him easily. I guess he thought I had conquered him, for he never bucked with me again that summer. However he lived up to his reputation as a bad horse later in the autumn when he fell over backwards and crushed his rider to death. That happened up on the Little Bow near Snake Valley.

Once in their idle time the boys thought up what they considered would be a good practical joke on poor Missouri. Joe

let Missouri overhear him talking to Dave when he said, "We're pretty near out of meat—should kill a beef this evening." Then they showed Missouri a certain longhorn steer in the herd, and told him he should cut it out and put it in the horse corral. The steer was certainly not fit for beef, probably the poorest one they could see. It was about five feet across the horns and perhaps a foot and a half across its body. What Missouri didn't yet know was that outfits rarely killed anything for beef but a good two-year-old heifer. So all unsuspecting, he rose to the bait, cut the steer out of the herd, and chased it towards the corral. It was wilder than an antelope, dashed into the corral and right through the other side. He tried to turn it back while the cook and I both came out to watch. By this time the steer was really mad and turned on us, chasing us back into the tent. Next he ripped off both the guy ropes on one side and the tent collapsed in a heap. We were glad to climb on the cook-wagon where we had to stay until Joe and Dave decided to call off the joke before more harm was done.

The boys tried out other tricks on Missouri when they saw how easily he rose to the bait. One such stunt they pulled off down at Verdigris Lake when we were camping there. Perhaps our cook was most to blame in this instance when he said in an elaborately careless manner, "I tell you boys, a mess of snipe for breakfast would be the clear ticket!" The boys at once caught on, and began to speak of where they could get plenty of old tin cans, some four-horse whips, wide-mouthed gunny-sacks and other things they would need if they went out on a snipe hunt. They rather ignored Missouri, did not ask him to join in the hunt; in fact gave the impression he would not be of any use in such a hunt. At last he could stand it no longer and asked if he might be allowed to go along. Of course, they agreed. However they did not show any enthusiasm at the idea, and some of them soon got into a noisy argument about who should hold the sack. One advised another he should be the one as he was too fat to do anything else. The second advised the first to take that job as he was such a poor walker. Then someone suggested Missouri hold the sack as he knew nothing of snipe hunting. He promised to do the best he could, so they decided he should be the man. About a half-mile from the

wagon they had lit a small fire with sticks in a little ravine. They told Missouri they would split up and start up the snipe by making a lot of noise. They would then drive them towards him from all directions. All he had to do was to keep the fire burning with small sticks and, standing behind it, hold the mouth of the sack square and wide-open till the birds flocking in would soon fill it up. When he had about three dozen he could snap the mouth of the sack shut and call it a day. He did as he was told, then waited, and waited. After a few minutes' of earsplitting din the others sneaked away to camp and went to bed. After an hour or so a shower of rain began to fall. By this time Missouri was beginning to be very suspicious, and at length went back to camp and to bed. He was indeed a good sport, for he did not ever mention the matter afterward. But he did not remain with our outfit much longer. I met him once more about a year later. He was then a full-fledged cowboy working for the Bar U, and one of the best cow-men you would ever wish to see.

As we travelled south-east through the country we camped at a beautiful little lake named Tyrrell's Lake. The water was clear as crystal and sparkled like diamonds in the sunlight. Gentle little waves were lapping the shore. We pitched camp beside it and the man with the lead-wagon, looking at the water so very inviting, felt his thirst increase a hundredfold. "I must get a pail of that lovely clear water right away—I'm awfully dry!" he exclaimed. I may say that the man was a stranger in that part of the country. He got the pail of water and dipped a cup into it. He took a couple of gulps but said nothing, waiting for the cook to try it. The cook was quick to spit it out. I tried a mouthful but could not swallow it. It had the most rotten taste you can imagine—like a solution of every known chemical. However no one said a word as they watched each newcomer try it one after another. The cook used it for making supper, but it was almost impossible to eat the food. The tea and coffee too were impossible, yet the horses drank freely and seemed to enjoy it. One of the boys went about half a mile to the nearest farmer's house for good water for breakfast.

We went on and camped at Writing-on-Stone, or "writing-

stone," as the boys called it. There the rocks stood up like great pillars with irregular channels (perhaps at one time waterways), between. It was a sight never to be forgotten. On the soft, chalky surfaces were many dates and inscriptions, some at the height of the human arm, some seemed to have been carved from a horse's back or standing in a wagon, while the more daring must have climbed to a considerable height in order to register their names and the dates. Some dates were as early as the seventeen hundreds, while ladies' names were inscribed as far back as 1860 and 1870.

We moved across Milk River and went down toward Gold Butte which stood out dome-shaped and majestic among the Sweet Grass Hills. I remember well the Fourth of July. We had made camp about twelve miles from Sweet Grass, and the next morning the ground was covered white with a thick sprinkling of snow. But the snow was no pleasure to us. We felt pretty well frozen up as we were dressed in thin summer clothes, and some of us without any gloves. On our way back from the border a bad accident involving our bed-wagon held up our outfit for nearly a day. I don't know why, but bed-wagon teams were usually refractory, and this team was no worse than most. This particular team boasted a horse that would not pull at all unless his tail were tied to the double-trees. The driver of such a team indeed needed to be a marvel of a teamster! While most of the boys were busy helping gather the cook's outfit so we could get started, the balky sorrel took a notion to run away. He "jack-knifed" the team and broke the wagon-pole. At that particular time all the saddle-horses had been tied in a circle, no trees being handy. That is, all the horses' heads were tied together by the bridle reins so that the restless ones would not try to wander. And the boss, in great haste to overtake the runaways, was not able to get his gentle horse in a hurry. So he climbed on the first one that came handy which happened to be a half-broken animal belonging to one of the crack riders of the outfit. At once he began to buck and we all held our breath, but were more than surprised to see the boss stay on and ride him.

He soon stopped the runaways, but now the burning question was: How will we get a new pole? According to our best

knowledge we were nearly fifty miles from the closest store or blacksmith shop. So two riders were sent to the nearest river bank, about ten miles away, to get the straightest cottonwood pole they could find. They returned as soon as possible, and with the aid of the few tools in the outfit and some borrowed from a rancher who happened to live near, a wagon-pole was fixed up. It was about four in the afternoon before we were ready to start out. We made our way across the open country to the Belly River north of Coaldale without any further mishap. We followed the river as far down as the junction of the Bow and Belly Rivers at the Forks. Here we came into a country infested with rattlesnakes, particularly in the vicinity of Half-Breed Springs, later known as the Spring Camp. I remember we killed two close to our camp site before ever we got our camp set up. The boys came in the first afternoon with all kinds of stories about how many they had killed or seen.

One of our boys named Dave was sure scared of rattlers, and it was too bad the rest of the boys found this out. Dave had decided he did not want to sleep on the ground in the bed-tent so he levelled off a place where the firewood was piled in the bed-wagon and decided to make his bed there. To scare him the other cowboys had joined a lot of rattles from different snakes into one long string, supposed to have come from one huge snake. After seeing that, Dave was surer than ever that he wanted to sleep in the wagon. While he was busy elsewhere the others tied one end of the string of rattles to a bow close by. The other end was also fastened to a string. Like all the boys he went to bed about half past eight, and it wasn't long before one of the conspirators pulled the hidden end of the string. A faint rattle sounded inside the wagon. Very soon Dave was out of the wagon with his clothes under his arm, and rousing his supposedly sleeping companions, he told them there was a snake in the bed-wagon. They just laughed at him and told him a snake could not climb into a wagon. Still he was not convinced, so he got dressed.

He stayed up helping the night-herder the rest of the night. In the morning some of the boys made quite a point of hunting for the snake, but of course they couldn't find any.

We had a bad mix-up at the end of a dry, dusty day when

about five men were following a herd of around two thousand cattle. The cowboys, dodging and turning, were bringing up the rear, forcing along the tired cows and calves. There was a choking cloud of dust from the feet of the herd that the boys were pushing along. They were using their lariats to "pop" at the lagging animals, and doing their best too, to encourage them with that peculiar cowboy chant or song. "Hi-yi-yip-pee-ay!" One lad was whiling his time away practising roping calves as he rode along. At last by some fluke, when he went to shake the rope off the foot of the calf, it did not come off. Instead, the other end was jerked out of his hand and landed out over the herd, roping in some peculiar way the horns of a three-year-old steer. There was a knot on the end, and it held fast on the horns, and here were the two animals, one on each end of the rope, struggling to get free. The boss happened along just then and he was very angry at seeing the two animals tied together. He had seen much smaller things cause a bad scattering of the herd. With a tongue-lashing for those who had no more sense than to do such a thing, he watched the boys catch the steer and take the rope off its horns. Luckily no harm had been done.

One time during the round-up I nearly got in bad with that all-important man, the cook, by trying to pull someone else's chestnuts out of the fire. Perhaps this cook was cranky, but that was no excuse for the boys always trying to swipe pies between meals. They picked on me as the one most likely to get a chance at the pies because I kept the cook supplied with wood and water. Then, too, I was always the last one out of the cook-tent. It just happened one particular night, when the boys had primed me to get a pie, the cook was already in bed and had left the grub-box open. I asked him if I better close the box and shut the tent-flap. He said, "Sure," without paying any attention to what I was doing. So, before closing the box I slipped out one of the pies. Much good it did me! I went to the bed-tent and as soon as I got near the boys grabbed me and took the pie away. Then their fun began, for about a dozen boys in their underwear were up in a flash, chasing that pie. The pie was sure treated rough, and I don't think anyone got a decent mouthful. I know I didn't, and I don't think the night-herder

did though he came in to get his share. Now—what to do with the pie-plate was the problem. Some wanted to throw it away, but the boss said "Give it to me!" He threw it at the cook-tent; it hit the canvas and slid to the ground. The next morning the cook was really "on the prod," and told the boss someone had been into his pies. The boss, who had been one of the most playful of the pie-eaters, nodded gravely, saying he would do his best to find out and then punish the culprit.

Across the Big Bow we could see another outfit at work, but we did not go over. We came back in a wide half-circle to the Twelve Mile Corrals and the big steam dipping-vat. That was the time mange was so bad that cattle could not be exported unless they were dipped; in fact there was an embargo against them. The huge vat was about fifty feet long, with big corrals and a chute leading from the corrals to the vat. The dip was a mixture of lime and sulphur boiled together and watered down. This liquid was run into the vat to a depth of about nine feet while being kept warm with steam pipes. The cattle coming down the chute had to travel the length of the vat through this fluid. Dipping was usually done in September and October. In order that the splashing liquid would run back into the vat, there was a high board fence along both sides. There was plenty of colour, and sometimes even an accident, in connection with putting the cattle through the dipping-vat. One Longhorn steer with extra wide horns was a worry to the boys lest he get caught in the chute. So they put him in alone. But he slipped through fast and easily, holding his head sideways and reminding one of a snake. Another big farmyard steer lay down in the vat, leaving the cattle behind in danger of drowning. In fact one calf did drown before the steer was yanked out with saddle-horses.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LEISURE AT THE COW-CAMP

IT WAS not uncommon for visitors, even lady visitors, to come to the camp from time to time. The arrival of a lady visitor at a cow-camp was something very different from their daily life, and a welcome break in the too-often monotonous round of cowboy life. So there was always quite a stir in the camp when such an event was on taps. There would be a great flurry among the boys, who would usually be greeting their visitors against such a background as this. Picture a peaceful scene after a quiet, uneventful morning; a couple of tents pitched on a long grassy slope looking down on the river; one tent with a wagon against it as if backed through the door; a large tarp stretched and pegged to the ground, while ten or twelve saddles covered with saddle-blankets are scattered about close to a rope corral. A bunch of saddle-horses, perhaps a hundred, are pasturing a short distance away. At a closer view of the scene, ten or twelve men are relaxing in the shade of the tarp, or lying on their beds in the bed-tent. Some may be fixing some little fault in their equipment, playing mumble-peg, or just whittling. But everything comes to a sudden halt at the sight of a lady rider headed for the camp. There is a sudden search for clean shirts, sporty neckerchiefs, or some other article to adorn the person. This might well turn out to be a social occasion as the wives and daughters of nearby ranchers often turned out to break the monotony of their daily lives, as well as ours. Often the thought of eating at the round-up wagon reminded them of "dining out." But in spite of the careful adornment of their person many of the less experienced boys found themselves at a loss in carrying on a conversation after they had been introduced to the ladies present. Then they

quietly slipped from sight leaving the older married men to do the entertaining. Through experience these latter had lost their awe of women; or there might even be one or two boys from the higher levels of British society who had already acquired the social graces. I might mention here that while prairie girls often rode astride, there was still a school among



the more prominent ranchers where the women and girls wore divided skirts while riding, as well as gauntlets and high-laced boots. This divided skirt did not offend the fashions; when worn for walking it looked like any other skirt of good length.

Of course the most important person in the camp was the cook, and the ladies were soon introduced to him. Later when the dinner was ready he always came and politely invited them to the table along with their menfolk. To the boys he simply said one word: "Grub-pile!" Then he got a plate, a cup, a knife, fork, and spoon for each lady present and told her to help herself. The food would be set out in kettles on the stove, on the oven door, and on a low table at one side. The bill of fare would be something like this: roast beef and gravy, hot biscuit with butter, canned peas, potatoes, and the all-important pie or pudding for dessert. The boys on the other hand went into the cook-tent for what dishes they needed, helping themselves in present-day buffet style, filling their cups with coffee, then going to sit down cross-legged in the shade of the tarp while they ate. Their dishes were dropped into the dishpan afterwards, being left for the cook to wash. When saddling-up time came the boys were more at their ease. They were now on familiar ground. They picked out their best mounts and began showing off with jaunty ease.

One day in dipping time a city man, accompanied by some ladies, ran over to the vat to get a good view of a wild steer going through. It was a windy day and unfortunately he found himself on the wrong side, for he was wearing an immaculate white shirt and collar. He had just pulled his head and shoulders above the high board fence to get a better view, when in went the steer with a great big splash. The visitor was deluged with the yellow fluid from the tip of his hat to the top of the fence. Didn't the boys have a hearty laugh that time? And didn't the victim look and feel foolish?

Another case where the human got the dip along with the steer happened where an enormous barrel-shaped vat was being used—a steam engine forcing out a thick oil spray. At noon-time when the vat was idle a certain show-off rider, accompanied by a girl to whom he was explaining how the contraption worked, began to demonstrate. But he forgot that at 1 p.m.

dipping would start up again, and thus got fair and square in the path of the spray. In his haste to get out he fell face down in the sump and one big steer ran over him. He was so plastered down with oil when he was rescued that his own mother would not have known him.

One day the engineer at the vat was telling the boys a funny story when suddenly the pop-valve stuck. When it got past the safety mark he decided to act. He took a piece of two by four and gave it a smart rap. Then an awful noise! Not only a cloud of steam but a spray of hot water hissed up and boiled over on everyone near. The boys stampeded outside, and in their haste piled up in a ditch used for draining the vat. When the excitement died down they tried to get themselves seated comfortably as before. Ten minutes or so of peace then another scare. This time, spurs and all, they rushed out again and into the ditch. Fire in the sacks of sulphur was found to be the cause of the second scare. No doubt but that a burning cigarette had done the mischief. Sulphur being what it is, it took them a long time to quench the fire.

But the days of the mange epidemic were drawing to a close. Drawing to a close, too, were the days of the wide-open range and the grazing herds on a thousand hills. The hard winter of 1906-1907, when so many range cattle perished, played its part, along with the ever-increasing influx of the homesteaders from all parts of Canada, the United States, and Europe.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HOMESTEADERS TAKE OVER THE RANGE

I HAVE already mentioned a few of the very earliest homesteaders in our immediate district that came around 1902 to 1904. Some of the other real early ones I call to mind are: Bert and Jack Graham, John Jones, Josh Norman and his brother, Ed Larter, George Williams, Mr. Cox and his daughter, Mrs. Powell, from England; also the Malloy brothers, Pat, Mike, and Andy. Sundial, so named from the Indian sundial that acted as a landmark, had in the very early days another landmark, "Old Hod Main Lake." Most of the homesteaders there came from the middle and western states, and as their families came with them they built a school in 1907. Homesteaders with growing families came to the Coyote Lakes area (later the Huntsville or Iron Springs district) from the Manitoulin Islands, and some from farther east. Such families were the Frasers, Fishers, Hunts, Wrights, Tennants, Dickouts, Wymans, and Arthurs. Just north was a German settlement where some of the settlers built themselves sod shacks and barns. There were the Reiters, Heiters, Rocklers, Alms, Guskes, and others I cannot call to mind. In fact, many of them came and went away in a matter of a few years. When Turin was settled it was largely by people from the United States, some of whom brought with them the first interest in baseball which until then had been considered chiefly an American game.

The main entertainment for young and old alike was dancing, so a dance was the universal way of entertaining in those days. Perhaps Sam Brady set the style for our district when he gave a dance on the floor of his new house at Coyote Flats before even the walls were put up. Out-of-door dancing in the summer, particularly at picnics, was much favoured, and enthusiastic young folks put up wooden platforms without any urging. Otherwise the dances were held in any houses large enough

to serve the purpose. Music might be a fiddle, or a mouth-organ and bones. Early callers for these dances were Heavy Bowers, Baldy Buck, Bert Wyman, Roy Wright. Some prominent fiddlers through the years were Ike Hanson, Tom MacDonald, and Jess Silsbe. The homesteaders came with rosy dreams which were encouraged by such good fortune as came to one of the pioneers, Oscar Woodcock, when he sowed wheat on sod on July 12 and reaped a good harvest. Good soil and good crops encouraged the farmers to put up good barns in many cases. So it was not long before some large barns with board lofts were commonly used for dances, as no halls were available. To these dances friends, neighbours, and people from a distance would come trooping in wagon, democrat, buggy, or on saddle-pony. Dancing would start about nine o'clock, with lunch served at midnight. Then a fresh start, and the dancing might last till breakfast time. In fact, it sometimes happened that some visitors would still be at the home of the host to take breakfast with the family.

Apart from enjoying these parties very much, I found it a grand chance of getting acquainted with the new people, and from 1904 to 1910 that was the way I got acquainted with them. For their part these parties were a sort of welcome to them from those already located here. And so fences, shacks, what passed for barns, and straw-stacks were to be seen all over the countryside. For my part I found the new fences mighty inconvenient one night when on round-up. I set out for home to get some clean clothes, but found I could no longer follow the old trails on saddle-horse. I got lost between Crooked Lakes and home, an area I knew very well, and wandered around lost till daylight came. Homesteaders now settling in the Turin district were the Gibsons, Greens, Nobles, Warrens, Spencers, Rogers, Neves, Johnsons, Matthews, and I don't know how many more. Among the settlers across the river in Sundial district were the Ingrams, Roses, Engens, Conners, Farleys, Oseens, Mains, Matthews, Larsens, Kellermans, and many others who have moved away. A very sad incident befell a recently-arrived family when the wife and mother succumbed to convulsions, leaving a family of small children. As there was no cemetery in the district her remains were buried on a little knoll on her

husband's quarter, with old Mr. Cox, a layman, taking charge of the funeral.

Sometimes the homesteaders found themselves in very unexpected situations as when Sam Brady, but newly settled, found himself surrounded by water after a quick spring thaw. The run-off from the snow filled up Coyote Lakes, and the only way out from the house was across the Tennant quarter to the north. I lived with Ernie until my mother came out to live on her quarter in 1907. We then built a shack on her north-west corner just above the river, and we found there was a great demand for a "stopping-place" at that point, when the ferry was just below us. The trail to Lethbridge went by our door on the way from the settlements across the Little Bow as far as Travers, Rosemead, and even beyond. It was impossible with poor trails and hilly roads for a man with a team of horses to make any kind of a long journey in one day. And many a settler stayed with us overnight, while many a heavy load did I help to pull up the steep coulee hill with my "snatch team."

I had undertaken to perform my mother's homestead duties when she filed and now I filed on a quarter half-a-mile north—the nearest one available. My nearest farming neighbours were Cliff Larsen and Mr. Ringrose. Ted Langley was also quite near. I bought a plough and fenced our quarters for the sake of keeping in our own cattle. I ploughed enough to fulfil our homestead duties, but I can say right here that my farming operations were not a success, either then or at a later date. Perhaps I was not cut out for a farmer (with which opinion many of my friends agree); or perhaps my background and training were not of the right sort to produce a good farmer? Perhaps I was not one of the few who can start farming from "scratch" and either by luck or their own efforts get to the top. In the back of my mind I was always planning how I should "keep the farm" instead of planning how the farm should keep me. I do not know! In any case, my attention to the land was rather spasmodic, and I did no more than was necessary. I was always keeping my eyes and ears open for outside employment on which I could count for cash. I liked working for our neighbour, Billy Hill, when I had spare time, and he was still living there.

A very amusing incident took place one morning when I was working for Billy. I had been out riding and chanced to see a newly-arrived homesteader with a team and wagon gathering up some old posts. At that time domestic fuel of any kind was precious on the homesteads as there was little coal to be obtained near at hand. Otherwise the settlers had to use "cow-chips" or driftwood and willows from the river. I quickly informed Billy of what I had seen, and he went out to look into the matter. Now Mr. Hill, when he had first fenced in his pastures, had put in a drift fence just to keep his stock from "drifting". Now that the homesteaders had come, he had to put in a fence on proper lines, and he was in the process of tearing down the old fence. He had left the posts and other material lying on the ground until he should have bought enough new ones to incorporate with the old ones for a proper fence. So, when he greeted the homesteader he asked what he was doing with his (Mr. Hill's) posts. "Oh, just loadin-em-up to take home." Mr. Hill was very good-natured about it. "Didn't you know I was going to use them again? Now, being as you have loaded them up, you can take them home. But don't take any more. I need them."

And this was how one local homesteader earned himself a nickname that stayed with him as long as he lived, "Load-em-up."

About 1906 Mike Malloy opened up a drift mine in Picture Butte Coulee, which proved very convenient for the settlers. The trail that led to this mine was rough and narrow, across a big pasture that had been fenced for horses and cattle not long before, and down the rugged coulee side. The oldest Malloy brother, Pat, was an experienced miner and had opened up this "gopher hole". And it really meant a great deal to the homesteaders.

The homesteaders were a hard-working lot, although there were a few who had come thinking they would "make a stake" growing wheat in a year or two and then sell out. But most took their land seriously and did their best to improve their bare surroundings by putting in trees and gardens. Among them E. J. Larter, an Englishman, has over the long years made his grounds, in fact all his land, a veritable garden of beauty.

The new settlers had to do their share in fighting prairie fires in their early years of farming. I think that it was in 1906, when we were spending an easy day after a dance at Fullers the night before, that we noticed heavy smoke in the west. We knew there was a fight with fire coming for us. I was working for Mr. Hill just then, so he and his other man as well as Ernie and myself started out to meet the fire which was sweeping towards the Picture Butte pastures; and incidentally headed towards our own pastures. When we got close to Picture Butte Coulee we began back-firing. By this time Mike Malloy and his men, as well as two men who were on a coal-testing exploration outfit for the C.P.R., had joined us. Between us we managed to put out this fire without too much damage to our pastures. As none of the Malloys were married at this time their mother kept house for them. Although of a great age she was a very strong personality, and had for years before kept a miners' boarding-house in Lethbridge. She was Irish as could be, and still active enough to do her own work.

Some years later, after many homesteaders had come to Turin, a bad fire was sighted during a dance at Tad Green's. It first showed north-west of the hill above the Nolan Bridge, and the dancers rushed out to save their homes. A wagon-load of us drove over to fight it. We dipped sacks in water to beat out the side-fires caused by the wind. I had been thinking I knew everyone in the district, but now there worked beside me a young fellow in overalls, shirt, and felt hat, whom I could not remember having seen before. I am compelled to say that I used plenty of bad language in blaming the "so-and-so" who started the fire. After several hours we had the fire out and sat down together to talk things over. My fire-fighting companion took off his hat, and a shower of long hair fell down over the shoulders. Mrs. Palmer was her name—the wife of a newly-arrived settler. I felt much abashed trying to recall something of what I had said when I was talking to her. In those days we never saw women dressed in men's clothing. Later we all went back to the dance, and had lunch, then danced till three or four in the morning.

At that time I knew practically all the newcomers. Today, if still alive, they are classified as the real old-timers. In Turin I

think of Dan Faw, Sam Turnage, George and John Sorgard, Pete Jorgenson, Neil Sinclair, Isaac Hanson, William Mellow, Joe Chapman, Erwin and Luke Haines; all these I have not mentioned before. I met Luke Haines, afterwards weed inspector for the district, under rather odd circumstances. One day while riding I noticed quite a commotion among a bunch of horses. I rode nearer and found a white horse among the herd. He was wearing a blanket, and that is what caused the excitement. While I was trying to stop him, Luke Haines rode up, looking for a horse he had lost. That was the horse with the blanket.

I might mention the Papworths, the Secrists, Dr. Woodcock, and Goldie Hill in the Sundial district area. East of the Tom McNabb place with its growing orchard was the spreading Robert Harvie ranch, partly circled by a multitude of sandhills. Robert Harvie, who had come to Canada with his wife, two sons, and a daughter, had worked for a time in Lethbridge. About 1908 he and his family moved out on the land. An experienced coal miner with First Class papers in Scotland, he soon found himself in demand to oversee coal-mining operations, following this occupation both in Diamond City and at the Heighes Mine at Picture Butte. Other neighbours who lived close to the Coe holdings were George Bathgate, Ed Lewis, and Tom Anderson. Homesteaders who came to our vicinity as the tide grew stronger were the Heighes, the Tom Kanes, E. P. Kanes, Moss, Ed Jones, Pooles, Hobbs, George Pearsons, Beiswangers, Tuckers, Tom MacDonalds, Ed Landrys, the Noble families, the Whitelys, and several young men of the above-mentioned families who had come of age to file for themselves. Other names that soon became familiar through the country north of the Belly River were Turnbull, Caplin, Tichler, Nelson, Munson, Hammon, Haney, Lebar, Arthur Jones, Archie Davy, and others as well known.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

TRAGEDY FOR THE RANCHERS

THE STORY of the hard winter of 1906-1907 has been told so often that perhaps it has lost its interest for many readers. Nevertheless it still stands out as a real tragedy for many a cattle-man. Ernie lost more than half his herd and his registered bull. I had about fifteen head, young stuff, and saved only two. We had never considered winter feed for our herd a necessity as they ranged on the prairie grass all the year around. That the snow on the ground before Christmas was a little deeper than usual did not cause us any alarm. When a Chinook came it melted only the top of the snow and a crust of ice was formed. Came another snowstorm, then another Chinook which melted only slightly the top snow. A second crust was formed, and now snow on the open range was anywhere from twelve to eighteen inches deep. Add to this the many new fences put up by the homesteaders, and the hungry animals found it almost impossible to roam about for food. Even straw-stacks were scarce, for the farmers usually burned the straw they did not need. The condition of the starving animals became pitiable, as cows cannot paw their way through ice and snow as can horses. Most of the cattle drifted south before the cold north winds. They tried to find shelter and food in the coulees, eating old leaves and branches of trees and shrubs. They wandered up and down along the rivers in single file, following blood-marked trails, for the hide and flesh was torn up to the knees by the sharp crust ice. On the flat prairie they would drift before the wind from river to river, sometimes even following coyote trails in their frantic search for food. Their continuous bellowing and hollow moaning could be heard for miles on the winter air. After the New Year the cold continued unabated, and frozen



as they lay overnight, many never got up in the morning. It was a common sight to see dozens, and even hundreds, dead in a coulee beside a river. Sometimes on a side-hill the leader would slip off the path and "beaver-slide" to the bottom. Others, pushing behind, followed and met the same fate. They seemed unable to make any effort to save themselves! There they lay till they perished or were mercifully shot. Strangely enough, where mature cows and heavy steers died, young steers and heifers often survived. The air-holes in the rivers (where solid ice never formed over a strong current), took an extra heavy toll that winter. Starving animals went to the water more often to assuage their hunger pangs. Riders had to be very careful going near them for they were always "on the prod"—always dangerous. Even farmers found they had to carry their shot-guns when going back and forth to their barns. Perfectly wild cattle often came around and took possession of the barnyard, fighting for whatever hay, straw, or refuse was lying around. A man without a gun frequently had to call for help. Mr. Fisher, of Iron Springs, was treed on top of his barn for several hours before some neighbours saw his plight and came to rescue him. Around Lethbridge barns three or four hundred wild cattle wintered. One woman in her haste to escape their notice went in to Harry Bentley's store and left the door open behind her. A steer followed her in. Sundial Williams, who had gone north in the fall of 1906 with some two hundred and fifty head, was reported to have only forty left in the spring. He was one of many to find their herds wiped out.

Although this was to be expected, a still further misfortune lay ahead. The green grass of early spring was estimated to have killed off about twenty-five per cent of the surviving cattle. Bulls, big steers and cows with sucking calves were the first to die off. Anyone who had half of his herd left in the summer of 1907 was considered very lucky. The Circle suffered a stupendous loss. They had been running about twelve thousand head between the Big Bow and the Belly. Now more and more homesteaders were coming into their pasture lands, and they began to keep their stuff inside two fenced townships. Before long they moved all their herds to the Arrowwood district and to Queenstown.

In the spring of 1907 the Stockmen's Association and the brand owners issued permits to all who wanted to gather hides, and many a homesteader coming home with loaded wagon in the evening made himself a neat stake.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

RIDING EXPERIENCES

IN THE old ranching days as I remember them it was always a matter of pride that hospitality should be shown to strangers. I guess it became so much a custom that we banked on it; never expected anything else. So I was greatly surprised and never forgot what happened one night when Alf Watson and I were strangers in a strange neighbourhood. We had started on a trip towards Taber, thence south and east through the Chin and Kipp Coulee country, over to Verdigris, through Warner, and on to Lethbridge. We had dinner in Taber and while it was still early in the day we reached a ranch whose owner I was not acquainted with, though I knew some of his sons quite well. It was only about five p.m., but the sons persuaded us to put up our horses and stay overnight. Nothing loath, as we knew that stopping-places would be few and far between, we accepted. The rancher returned while we were talking with his sons and gave us a cool nod. He had been out fencing, and after he put his team away he asked us if we intended to stay for the night. We said we guessed so as the boys had invited us.

"No, you're not!" he said, "so you better be going." The boys objected, and said they would fix it up with the old man. But we thought not. We had money in our pockets and were not begging our way. So we saddled up and headed north for Kipp's Coulee and a sheep camp we knew there. It was just getting dark as we arrived. The door was open, and the herder had lit a lamp. He was busy cooking supper and making coffee. We called out to attract his attention. "Hello! What do you want?" he shouted. "Can we stay all night?" I asked. "No, beat it!" His answer was plain and to the point. We were dumbfounded to be refused shelter twice one night. We turned and headed up the coulee without speaking, for we knew of no other place near enough to go. We had gone perhaps three

hundred yards when the herder called out to us, asked us our names and where we were from. At first not inclined to tell him anything but where he could go, we finally answered and told him. Then he shouted to us, "Come back and stay! I was thinking you were someone else!" Reluctantly we turned back, not knowing what to think of the whole matter and not knowing of anything better to do. In our minds we had decided we better keep awake in shifts, for anything might happen. After we picketed our horses he told us he had a bite for us to eat. As we ate we began to talk and he told us his story. He told us a great deal about his life out there with the sheep; how his sheep-wagon, grub, and part of his range had been burned by jealous cow-men and horse-ranchers. When we understood his troubles we were able to sympathise with him, and knew he had good reasons for being suspicious.

We were no better off the next night, but no one was to blame. Evening found us in Warner where there was a land rush on. The hotel and the livery stable were both full, and even sleeping room on the hotel floor with your own blankets was all taken up. After getting supper in the restaurant we decided to go back about a mile and sleep in a haystack we had passed before. We dug a hole in the stack and though we had our own blankets, we found it hard to sleep or rest. It was early in the year and very cold. We had to run nearly half-a-mile the next morning before we got thawed out.

Sam Brady's oldest son, George, and I, being much of an age, did quite a bit of riding together. One day I went along with him to get two of his horses, a grey mare with a colt and a young bay mare about three years old. The horses were then ranging on the south side of the Belly River in the south part of the Cameron Field. When we found them we were supposed to halter-break the young bay and ride her. After that we tried to lead the old grey mare to water but found she was not halter-broke either. As soon as we got a rope on her she turned and chased us open-mouthed till we climbed up the sides of the corral out of her way. After that we had more trouble getting the rope off than we had getting it on. In the end we had to put her in the squeezer to handle her. Then we drove them both to water and back to the corral. Before long both horses got

away again and this time they took along a small sorrel that was very gentle and had already been ridden a lot bareback.

The next spring George and I had to go and gather up those horses again. The river was high for fording so we went around by Lethbridge. We stayed all night at the home of a rancher who lived north of the bridge and west of Lethbridge. As our saddle-horses were getting tired we decided to change them the next morning. We would ride the young bay we had broken and the gentle sorrel. We flipped a coin to see who would have to ride the half-broken bay, and I thought myself pretty lucky when I drew the gentle sorrel. George went to the corral, caught the bay and saddled her while I watched. She acted as pretty as could be. He mounted, rode around, and she acted as though she were used to being ridden every day. We thought how lucky we were. Then I went to catch and saddle the sorrel, but she acted rather queer as though she resented it. I got her ready anyway, but she was so hard to handle that I had to go through quite a few manoeuvres before I was seated in the saddle. Then the fight began, and it must have looked funny to any spectator. For one side of the corral was an open shed with a willow-brush roof. It was quite low, being used only as a shelter for stock. Hay had been piled on the willow-brush roof, but most of it had been used or else blown away. It was lucky for me that the roof was not solid as it was not much higher than the horse and saddle, let alone the rider! So my head and shoulders heaved up the brush continually, and kept bobbing through at intervals. I was too busy to laugh, but the rest laughed till their sides were sore. The joke was that I had drawn the worst horse when I was sure I had the better, and then to watch me bore holes in the roof with my head. I was fortunate not to be injured. Later this gentle pony, named Foxie, turned out to be a real bucking horse, and became well known in the years that followed.

During the time I rode Buck, the line-back buckskin, I suffered quite a serious accident. One Sunday morning after I had missed some of our stock from the pasture, I caught Buck, saddled him, and climbed on. I was wearing "gaiters" or elastic-sided boots, but as my spurs pulled these boots off when he went to bucking, I found them altogether too inconvenient.

So I changed to riding-boots. We loped to the river, I let him walk long enough to ford; then I loped again for about ten miles till I found myself north of Coaldale. There were the lost horses, and I headed them for home. The horses were fresh and feeling good and started down the trail at a stiff gallop. Buck was pretty warm by this time, and seeing the rest galloping he got excited and began to throw his head at a great rate. The bunch soon headed too far west and, in my efforts to turn them, I ran him pretty hard. Suddenly he stumbled and fell—a real wildcat somersault, as the cowmen called it. The last thing I remember I was on my back, and the horse's rump end coming straight at me. When I woke up I was sitting on the river bank opposite the Nolan ranch house, with an old axe handle in my hand. I don't know where I picked it up, but as I must have walked through a lot of range cattle, I likely picked it up for self-defence. When Mr. Nolan saw me there he sent one of his boys over with a saddle-horse for me. I went back with him, and they took me home. I spent a most uncomfortable and pain-racked night, and the next day they drove me to Lethbridge with horse and buggy. It was the most comfortable way of travelling then although it took two or three hours. I will always remember the discomfort and pain of that trip. Dr. Mewburn found a broken collar-bone and cracked chest. He fixed me up and sent me to my grandparents' town house till I was better. I may say Dr. Mewburn, who had been in attendance at my birth, expressed himself as amazed to see I had grown to be such a big strong man.

It was over a month before I could ride again. Buck was not found for several days and the horn was broken off his saddle. The cantle was broken too. It must have been Buck's body rather than the saddle that hit me, or I would have been injured much worse.

When I began to ride far afield I became acquainted with many of the smaller ranchers, as well as the newly-come farmers. Some of the places that come to mind: the John Davis horse-ranch; the Nate Bowser horse-ranch; the Bulmer ranch near Black Spring Ridge. Nate Bowser was west of the Malloy property.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THRESHING CREWS AND HALLOWE'EN REVELS

AS MORE and more homesteaders came, more and more wheat was grown each year. The demand for threshing outfits kept growing during the late summer and autumn. A man or well-grown boy could make good money with his bundle-racks, teams and his own labour. It was real work too and the hours were long. Sam Brady got himself an outfit, with his son George running the portable engine. I worked for him for a while—one week taking Sam's place and acting as cook when he had to go to Lethbridge. Later, Tom Wright, having bought a big Rumley engine, took over the separator work and managed the outfit. He worked in the Iron Springs district. This permanent name was given the area from a spring on the Bulmer ranch which was a never-failing water supply for the people of the district. The water was very good but had a large content of iron. When I worked for Jack Graham who was threshing in the Black Springs Ridge country, I turned over my bundle-team to someone else, and hauled water for him from a big well there. Bill Lappin was his engineer, and Jack handled the separator. When we worked at Albion Ridge we hauled water from Keho Lake. Well-known pioneers at Albion Ridge were the Davis and Lynn families, and the Brandvolds at Bowville. Olga Brandvold had been working for Mrs. Billy Hill when I worked for Mr. Hill.

It was early in the season when I was threshing with Brady and Wright in the Sundial district, and I remember the men slept outside under the wagons, with horse-blankets under them on the ground. The crews ate at the farmers' houses, and every farm wife tried to feed the crew better than the last one. It was a continuous feast as long as the stook-threshing lasted. Chicken

and pies in abundance were always on the table. One time one of the crew, Tom Gilroy, was injured by a pitchfork and they had to send for Mrs. Lee Secrist who was famous as a nurse throughout all that countryside. They brought her back in a bundle-wagon—a distance of a couple of miles. She found he had a broken collar-bone, and gave him First Aid.

Campbell Davis with his parents and sisters had homesteaded near Keho Lake about 1904-1905, and we became life-long friends. Though the first time I met him I was on a "stealing" mission. I had been riding on the marshy edges of Keho after a yearling that had run down to the water and got stuck. I needed a large board to walk out on, so as to rescue him, and seeing the new Davis homestead I made a bee-line towards it. While we were threshing at his place one fall Hallowe'en came around, and overnight someone put one of our loaded bundle-wagons on top of Campbell's big barn. To this day I do not know who did it, or how they did it. It took the crew two or three hours the next morning to unload it and get it down. And that same day (which was a Sunday), we threshed late in the evening to get the wheat finished. Then four of us decided to attend church, though we had no better clothes with us than what we were wearing at our work. The service was held in a school-house across the road. Our faces were still black with smut from the grain, and it just had to happen that several young women from our own district whom we knew well, were on hand, too. I'm afraid that most of us did not pay much attention to the service as the girls were already giggling in unholy glee at the sight of our blackened faces and untidy clothes.

One Hallowe'en about a dozen of us, most of them young fellows, set out to do all the mischief we could. We were disgruntled at not being invited to a Hallowe'en party being put on by some of our friends. Our first trick, under the cover of early autumn darkness, was to climb up on the roof of the house where the party was being held. The fellows on the ground pushed the chief actors up the eight-foot wall; they in turn stuffed a couple of gunny-sacks down the chimney. Then we all hid and waited to see what would happen. It wasn't long before we had our reward. Those inside flocked out the door;

coughing, sputtering and choking. For a time the party was broken up, while they were puzzling about what made the stove smoke. At last someone thought of the chimney and climbed to the roof. The sacks were found and taken out.

By this time we had thought up plans for further mischief. We went over to the Tucker quarter, gathered up all the buggies we could find around the neighbourhood, and piled them in a big heap across from the house—boxes first, then wheels thrown on top. Mrs. Tucker had a large bulldog for a watch-dog. We managed to rope him and tie him on top of the pile. There he was left until the morning, perhaps because no one dared to go near enough to let him loose. I might say that Mrs. Tucker came to our house the next morning to get me to loose him and take him down. She was afraid to try it herself. And at the same time she said she was quite positive I had done the trick, being the handiest person she knew when it came to using a rope.

After we left Tucker's someone thought of Clark Van Brocklin's milk cow, and we managed to push and squeeze her into a very small chicken-house. This trick brought Clark plenty of worry and trouble next morning when he could not find her anywhere, though he went out searching everywhere on horse-back and inquiring of the neighbours. When Johnny went to feed the hens he found her wedged in the tiny building, and they had to take the front out before they could get her free.

After all this mischief and exertion we were ready for a chicken-feed to wind up the evening in good style. Ted Langley, who lived alone on his quarter, offered the use of his house for the feed. So we all went in different directions looking for chickens, with instructions not to take more than two birds from any chicken-house. In fact I think we took but one from any one flock. And at the finish we had a real assortment, far more than we could eat. Not only chickens, but one turkey and one duck. We brought them in and turned them loose in a front room that Ted was not using. There they stood, blinking in the bright light. Then came the question of who would kill them, and who would clean them. Ted had a small hatchet and he offered to do the killing. And there he was, down on his hands and knees chasing the birds, and reaching out to give them a

smart rap on the head, one after another. As soon as a bird was stunned and went down he handed it to one of us saying, "Pick it and get it cleaned!" In short order we had them all cleaned and cooked. After we had eaten our fill we had all kinds of fowl left over for Ted, who was a bachelor, and did his own cooking. Thus ended our Hallowe'en revels, and I never heard a word afterwards about anyone missing any fowls. But we heard plenty, and for a long time, too, about the bulldog and the cow.

A well-known horse-ranch where good horses were raised was the Bulmer ranch established by a man from Nova Scotia. The horses he raised were considered good enough for remounts at the time of World War I, and were also in demand by the Mounted Police. Mr. Bulmer was later succeeded by his son John who had worked for some years on the railway. The latter I came to know very well. One day when I was riding from the Keho Lakes by way of the Bulmer ranch toward home, I was badly fooled by a commotion I saw among a herd of cattle. At once I thought their noisy excited milling about was caused by a wolf, as shortly before that I had rescued a calf from just such a lone prowler. The calf was in bad shape too, almost hamstrung—with a big chunk of meat gone from his leg.

But as I got nearer I could see nothing, not even a cat or a dog—to account for such a turning and jumping and running. When I got real near I could see a dead skunk, and then I knew some inquisitive cow had been sprayed by the cute-looking little cat, and the herd, infuriated by the stench, had trampled it to death.

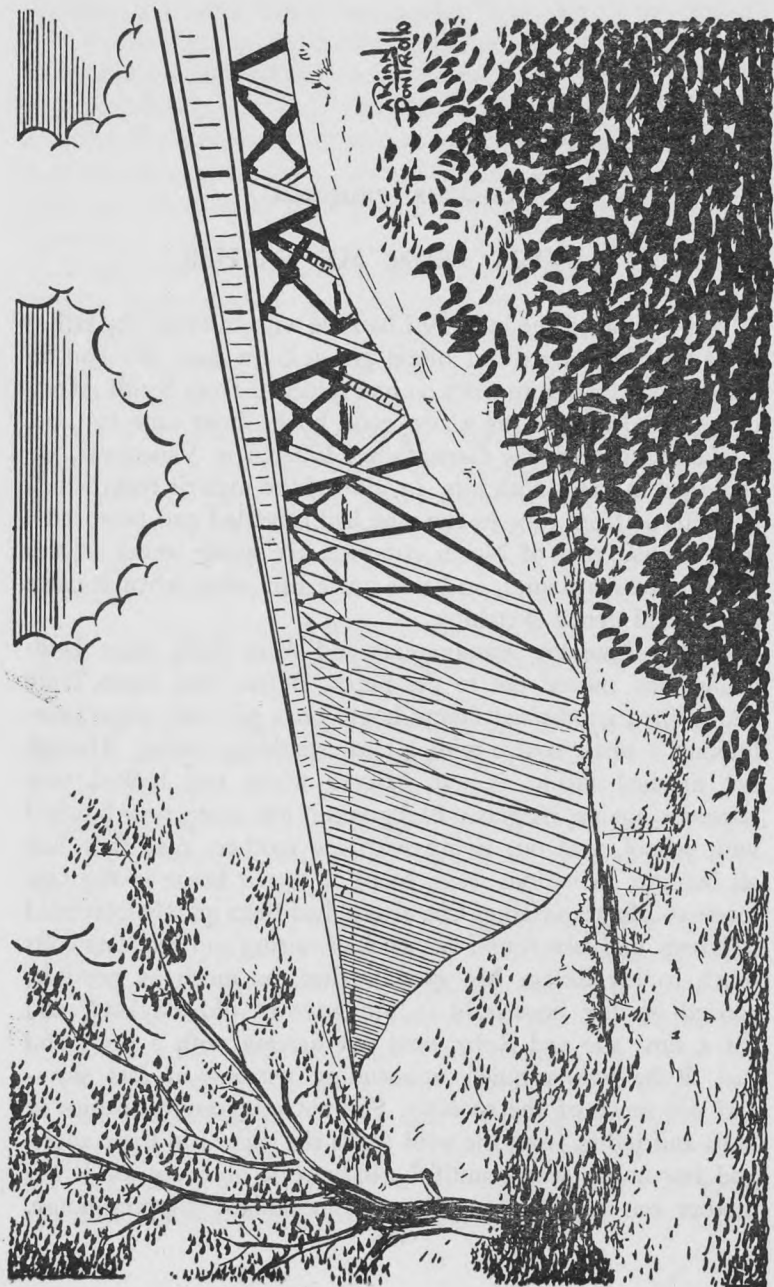
Another horse-ranch where I was always at home when I passed that way was the John Davis ranch. His wife, who had been a neighbour of ours in Lethbridge (Alice Perry), was a most capable mistress of the ranch and a wonderful helpmeet to her husband who early scuffered from blindness, so that it was necessary for her to assume a man's share in the management and direction of affairs. Their older son and a daughter had always been the best of friends with myself and my sister. A younger son, however, took over the property when he grew up, and his mother had remarried.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A VISIT FROM MY FATHER

WHEN I came of age in 1909 I had the wish to invite my father for a visit in order that I might get to know him. We had no direct word from him since he had returned from South Africa though he had sent me a few good books from time to time. However, through my Grandfather Warren in Vancouver, we could get in touch with him. In spite of the malaria from which he suffered from time to time, he had travelled and prospected over a great part of North America. He wrote travel articles for various magazines, and was not a bad artist when it came to pen and pencil sketching.

By this time my grandparents and Aunt Ruby from Lethbridge had moved out to the ranch. Before they came Ernie had built a good-sized frame house on a pleasant slope overlooking a small coulee with a clear sparkling spring. Though not finished inside, it was painted white and looked very attractive against its grassy background. My sister, now finished with school, was out living with my mother. And they had all become, in various ways, more or less at home in the new location. My grandfather Coe always had been greatly interested in horses, and now found our work of raising and breaking colts much to his liking. My grandmother, as much as possible, carried on her household in the ways of old England, and for a time she and Ruby went out driving with a pony and cart. Ruby was a quiet, unassuming person—in fact shy—and did much of the cooking. She put up great quantities of jams and jellies from the wild fruits she picked in the coulees, and her hobby was beautiful needlework of every kind. My mother was busy keeping her well-patronised stopping-house,



and also did beautiful embroidery. She had little idle time on her hands as she was an omnivorous reader of whatever came her way. My sister was of an age when she was much in demand at parties and dances, and she also became fond of riding horseback. We had a buggy for driving purposes, and Ernie had a team and democrat.

My father was an active man, and after he had visited with us for a while he began to look about for some suitable employment for his idle time; preferably in Lethbridge where he knew the old-timers. In this way, through Tom McNabb, he got a contract to build mine cars at No. 6 mine for the C.P.R. I was doing some horse-breaking for Ernie. When I had finished that, and the necessary autumn work on our homestead quarters, I went to Lethbridge and worked with him. He was a good carpenter, and from him I got a lot of valuable knowledge of carpenter work. We built living quarters for ourselves—a small shack—right under the high level bridge. While we were living there the bridge was painted, and we were filled with wonder as we watched the painters slide down the girders when meal-time came.

At a time when the Galt Coal Company were changing their gauge and increasing the capacity of their coal cars, several hundred new ones were being built. We worked on these for several months, finishing up our job during the summer. Then my father had a chance to buy the old pump-house—on the Lethbridge side of the river and north of the viaduct bridge—at a very low price. We tore it down and piled the lumber. Then we made the lumber into rafts with the idea of floating them down the river to my mother's quarter. We had considerable trouble with this. First we built too large a raft and, the river being low, it grounded on the sandbars. In all, it took us a week to get to our destination. We made smaller rafts after that, and with a "sweep" on each end we made the trip in two or three days, once we had located the channels. We rode these rafts, and had a man and team drive along up on the river bank as we made our way down. This man was in charge of our grub and beds, for we always tied up at night and slept on shore. We used the lumber for building a big hip-roof barn, my father and myself doing the building.

My father at first had not decided whether he would remain permanently in Alberta, but after many months had elapsed and there had been no reconciliation with my mother, he went to the State of Washington, where he married again a few years later.

Ernie's health had never been robust, my grandfather was becoming inactive and house-bound with age, and Ernie felt he needed a steady man about the place. Though he had lost most of his cattle in 1907, his herd of horses was increasing fast. So he sent to England for a young relative named Jack Taylor. Jack was around twenty when he came, and a very likeable lad, but he didn't know a thing about the wild and woolly west. I happened to be nearest at hand to help out his education in that respect, and some things that happened I can never forget. For instance, one time he caught a rattlesnake by the tail, barehanded. We were out riding when Jack called my attention to a large rattler on the ground. I saw the snake begin to slide down a gopher-hole and did not pay much attention to it. But Jack could see a length of tail with string of rattles and exclaimed, "I guess I can catch him by the tail!" In a flash he was off his horse and had made a strong grab at the rattles. What he did not know was that the snake had turned around in the hole, with his head peering out not far from the tail. The head came out hissing, but Jack's quick yank had broken off the rattles so they came away in his hand. He was a luckier boy than he had any right to expect!

In early summer, after the high water had left a big twelve by twelve timber, about forty feet long, grounded on Dead Man's Island, Ernie thought he could make good use of it. There was no way of getting it by team, so Jack and I decided to take off most of our clothing and ride it down the river to where a team could be hooked to it. When we got it out into the water we found it hard to ride as it rolled over and over in the current. We found ourselves in the water more than once before we got the hang of riding it. But we managed to ground it on our own side when we got down to the Nolan Bridge, from where we hauled it home.

Another time Ernie, Jack and I were out riding in the spring after our horses. As the young colts were arriving we liked to

hold the horses as close to home as possible. By three in the afternoon we had covered most of the Chin and Coaldale districts, and had the horses all ready to start back. There were a great many young colts in the bunch, and we decided the water was too high to ford. Instead we would go around by the Taber bridge. To do this we had to drive them east along the railway track. We got there about 7.30 p.m., and had to go to supper in shifts so as not to leave the stock alone. For this reason it was pretty late when we got them across and heading west. After six or eight miles it was getting so dark that it was almost impossible to travel the prairie trail and keep the bunch together. As we had no light of any kind we decided to stop for the night at the first convenient place. This proved to be the corner of a barbed wire fence which held the horses on two sides. We three spread along the third side of the triangle and lay down to rest till dawn. This would be no discomfort as the night was warm and pleasant. I told Jack how he could let his horse feed during the night by taking off his saddle and picketing him to the end of the rope. So far, so good! But we hadn't been settled down for more than an hour when I heard the most terrible commotion from Jack's location. I started up in haste to see what was the trouble. It was so inky black I could not see anything from where I was. I thought perhaps the herd was trying to get away? When I got near I could hear his excited voice and he was swearing like a trooper. When I asked him the trouble he said there were hundreds of insects swarming all over him, under his clothes, and biting something terrible! For a second I couldn't imagine what it could be—till my toe struck a good-sized ant-hill. Quickly I had Jack strip, get rid of the ants, and dress again. He told me he had found a nice buffalo wallow for a bed and the mound at one end seemed made for a pillow, so he had spread out his blanket there. But all too soon the ants had resented his presence and got busy. Jack was a good scout; he went back to England in two or three years leaving his saddle and equipment at Ernie's. Later I wrote him about whether I should sell his property, but he said, "No, I'm coming back after a while." But he never came or wrote again—perhaps killed in the first World War.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A BEGINNER IN THE LUMBER WOODS

MY GRANDFATHER Coe was particularly interested in watching me break colts and was often out at the corral when I was so employed. One fine spring day I was "front-footing" a colt that jumped against the corral gate. Grandfather was just outside the gate, and it fell out with the colt on top, striking him a hard blow on the shin. We did not realise how serious the injury was, for it seemed but a slight hurt at the time. But instead of healing, gangrene set in, and at last caused him great agony in the months before he died.

The death of my Grandfather Warren in Vancouver closed another chapter of my early associations. He bequeathed equally to me and my sister the share in his property that would have gone to my father. He also left to me some personal items of value including jewelled, engraved, and gold nugget tie-pins. The one I valued most (and still do), is a large old-fashioned key-wind gold watch which had been passed on to him by his grandfather, Rev. Dawson Warren, Rector of Edmonton (1770-1838). And it is so engraved as being his property.

What with changes in my life caused by death and departure, I seemed to be "at loose ends," and decided to try the lumber woods in British Columbia for a while. Many of the homesteaders around and their sons had been doing this for spare cash in the winter months. At first I intended to go with a neighbour, Cliff Larsen, but after I got my ticket for Jaffray and was on the train I found Cliff was not aboard. I wondered just what I would or could do, once I got off the train; had no experience in the lumber woods to fall back on in Cliff's absence. I asked the depot agent, where I got off,

if he could tell me anything about the lumbering there. He told me the Jewel Lumber Company were hiring men, and pointed out the road I should follow to their camp. Cliff had already told me that when asked what I could do, I should answer "anything." So I walked out to the camp, about a mile, and asked for work. The first job they gave me was sawing wood for the cook. I had been used to getting wood for the cooks on the round-up by chopping up small sticks. Now I found myself at one end of a cross-cut saw, cutting logs three feet in diameter into thirty-inch lengths for the stoves. I was surely green at that job, "riding" the big saw all the time, much to the disgust of the man at the other end, an older lumber-jack. He told me not to ride the saw—to pull it. When I asked the foreman, Bill Barr, for a job I told him that I had no lumbering experience. And the next morning he put me on at "swamping," where I cleared away the branches from trees that had been cut into lengths, and out of the way of the logs that were to be skidded. After a short time he put me "skidding" with one horse. Although I had always been used to horses it caused quite a laugh when I picked up the lines to drive and guide the animal. He was used to being directed by such words as "Gee!", "Haw!", "Whoa!", "Get up!", "Back up!" and the like; he was perfectly obedient to the spoken word. I guess I spent about two weeks "skidding" and then they found me a job on the "sleigh haul." I expect that was because few of their men were used to working around horses. Men of all tongues were there, and I was surprised to find out how few of them could speak English. And this fact perhaps led to the job I was given a few weeks after. It was quite a surprise to me when the boss asked me if I would take charge of a crew of Hindus who were cutting trails for roads to be used by water-tanks and other equipment. This crew was in need of constant supervision, being very easily diverted from their work by such trifles as asking the time of day, etc. I had also to make sure that the roads were made the required width, and brush cleared off close to the ground. I was also given the job of straw-boss around the horses, which meant I had to see they were fed, watered, and curried regularly, as well as properly harnessed. I greatly admired their work-horses,

which were fine big fat animals. It was November when I first went to work at the camp, and on in mid-winter I met with a serious accident that sent me to hospital in Fernie. And it was really my own fault.

I was still in charge of the Hindu crew, but one day, watching the trouble a driver had in putting his log on the skids, the log-roller in charge told me to drive the team on the skids and show the other man how to do it right. I took over the driving and was "showing off" by jumping on the log, which I was not supposed to do. I slipped and fell, catching my foot and ankle between the log and the skids. The men took the weight off me with their cant-hooks, and the boss, seeing it was a bad injury, put me in the cutter and sent me to the hospital at Fernie where I spent the next two weeks. As there was no room in the surgical ward they put me in the typhoid ward where a few typhoid patients were convalescing. Another boy from the lumber camp was there too. He had lost a couple of fingers when a sharp-shod horse stepped on his hand.

The hospital was a big brick building where all the mine casualties were treated. I particularly remember two of the nurses. One was a young, pretty girl, rather small, but a good nurse and very gentle. the other—I think she was German—was very large and very strong, and seemed to be so rough in handling injuries that she scared her patients badly. My foot and ankle were very badly swollen the next morning, but the doctor said there were no broken bones—only a badly-bruised ankle that would need a lot of poulticing and would have to be lanced to let the pus off the bone. The hot flax poultices every few hours were very painful, and more than once I threw the hot poultice back at the big nurse with my foot before I was able to stand it. The boy with the severed fingers absolutely refused to let her touch his hand and would wait for the gentle nurse to dress it. One lad there was just getting over typhoid and was hungry all the time. One day when we had rice pudding (all the patients seemed to dislike it as much as I) we gave our portions to the hungry boy, which made him quite sick for a time. Luckily it did not kill him as it might easily have done, and the doctor told us so in no uncertain terms.

One incident, very funny for the rest of the patients, but

very embarrassing for the man himself, concerned a typhoid patient who had recovered and was waiting to go home. Dressed only in his hospital nightie he got out of bed to chase a mouse he saw running around the floor of the ward. He reached down under a bed after it, with his back to the door. Suddenly the door opened and the ward nurse came in. Leaning down she gave him a swift resounding slap on the exposed rear end. He felt pretty cheap and quickly got back into bed where he hid his face under the clothes.

When my ankle had healed enough for me to leave hospital I took the train for home and was glad to be back on the prairie once more. There I found plenty of work, for in those early days there was always work of some kind for an able-bodied man. About then a lot of small coal mines, "gopher-holes", were being opened up to supply domestic coal for the settlers. Pick-miners with experience were not always available to dig, but a man with the necessary mining papers had to be in charge of the work. Robert Harvie was in charge of the Heighes mine for a time and I worked with him enough to learn the simple rules of pick-mining (digging coal with a pick), and of timbering entries and rooms.

I was shocked and saddened when I heard of the tragic death of Joe Lemar at the first Calgary Stampede, for he had been one of our neighbours of the early days. He and his wife, along with his brother-in-law, Phil Wallene, lived on the river bottom just above the Circle Ranch. Joe raised horses for a living and also broke particularly rough or mean horses for the ranchers. His opinion of a horse always carried weight. Joe and Phil were outstanding riders; Joe was a pretty rider. I used to see them at Fuller's place and at Billy Hill's. His wife did not like bad horses, and for her he had a gentle pony named Roanie. However, at length Roanie began to take advantage by starting to buck, which rather amused Joe when he heard about it.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1914, FIRST YEAR OF WORLD WAR I

ON FEBRUARY 4th, 1914, my sister, Gundred Yvonne Falkland Warren, was married to John Harvie, older son of Robert Harvie. John had come from Scotland with his parents, brother Charles, and sister Margaret. He had taken employment with the Civil Service here. Part of the time he had been in Lethbridge and part of the time in Medicine Hat. Now the wedding was to be solemnised in the Anglican church in Lethbridge, with a reception for the wedding party in the Alexandra Hotel dining-room afterwards.

A colder, stormier day for our long drive to Lethbridge could hardly be imagined. It was over twenty miles by prairie trail, and I had all I could do to prepare the sleigh so that it would be comfortable for my sister and mother in the raging blizzard. I put a buggy hood over the sleigh and hitched a four-horse team. My hired man, Scotty, went along with us too. At the reception Miss Nicholson, John's aunt, a lady of much dignity and poise, sat beside me. And in order to liven up the party I played a little joke on her by slipping olives in the pocket of her suit-coat. We were the only two there that liked olives, so as often as I took one for myself I slipped one in her pocket. When she began to tease me about eating so many, I told her I was only eating them, not putting them into my pocket. She pretended to be offended by what I implied, so I said, "If you don't believe me, put your hand in your pocket and see!" She was horrified when she found out it was true—so many watching her discover it. But she was a good sport and soon forgave me.

The wintry days slipped by, March, then April with its balmy days and greening grass, and innumerable gophers. None of us ever dreamed during those fine days that the nightmare of war

was just a few weeks ahead of us. There were many who believed that the world of our day was too civilised ever to embark again on such horror and destruction.

When May came in the spring rains tarried behind; the high scorching west winds blew, and a cloud of dust shrouded the horizon. In June and July the hot winds persisted while the young crops wilted and burned.

It was that spring I first met the girl who later became my wife. She was a small, rather quiet girl with fair hair and blue eyes. She had come from Prince Edward Island and was the new teacher in the Battersea school. She was boarding at the John Beiswanger home. John had been a carpenter back in Nova Scotia; now he was on a homestead about a mile from us. He kept a little grocery store in one room of his fair-sized house, and for a time Harry Dickout delivered groceries with a wagon for the customers living farther away. I went in one Saturday evening for a few grocery items and was introduced to the new teacher, Miss Matheson. Battersea was one of a number of one-room schools that had been put up during the past few years, and taught all grades up to nine—and often nine too. At this time the Huntsville school (which had been the earliest built and had for its first teacher Mrs. Clara King), was taught by Lillian Kane, who was a daughter of one of Battersea's best early farmers, Tom Kane. Tom had come from Iowa and certainly had a "green thumb" when it came to vegetable gardens and potatoes.

After I had put in the crop on my mother's quarter and my own I went to work for A. E. Dupen, who was looking after the interests of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Barnes, on the Barnes ranch near Lethbridge. Mrs. Barnes had always been one of the best friends of the Coe family. Now she wanted to dispose of her late husband's property which consisted mostly of livestock. She was living at the Barnes ranch-house and keeping house for her son-in-law and three small children, whose mother (her daughter) had passed away some time before. Mr. Dupen had been in charge of taking care of her ranch stuff, and knowing my experience with stock, hired me to look after them. And there I spent most of the summer and fall. When I was not too busy on the ranch I helped Mr. Dupen in the new Barnes

Coal Mine which he was opening up. There was little need for me at home as the 1914 drought had dried out all our crop.

In August the First World War broke and I joined the Home Guards cavalry unit which was being drilled by Major Burnett once a week at the Barracks parade ground. That summer I broke for riding a very pretty F.A. gelding, brown with a small white spot on his face, and weighing about eleven hundred pounds. I called him Buster, because that name seemed to suit him. The first time I tried to ride him he bucked me off and I slid down into a cow manger. Albert Dupen got a great laugh out of that and told me I needed molasses on my pants. However, I got this horse nicely broken, obedient too, and he could be very swift on occasion. Once that summer I roped a coyote from his back. I used to ride him quite a lot when I went home across the river on week-ends. I felt that these long rides would give him needed exercise. Then Albert, seeing he was so well-trained and pretty, cast a desirous eye on him and decided he would like to keep him for himself. So he told me not to use him any more that he might be available whenever he wanted him. I was to put him in with his own private string of saddle-horses and feed him well. This I did. As time went by I mentioned that he should give him more exercise unless he wanted trouble with him.

One evening he directed me to saddle Buster as he wanted to ride him to town to a lodge meeting. He asked me if he was used to his rider wearing a slicker, and I told him I had frequently done so. So he put on a yellow slicker, and so clothed he did not find it easy to get on. When he landed awkwardly somewhat behind where he should have been sitting, Buster began to buck and soon Albert was off in the red cinder pathway. All this time I was laughing fit to kill as I said, "Who needs the molasses now?" If looks or words could have killed me, I would have been dead then and there. But after a while, when he had time to recollect, he forgave me. After I left he hired a boy named Billy Reed, and whether by intention or accident, Buster developed into a real buckner. He took first prize for bucking in Lethbridge and made a name for himself, later being sent on to Calgary and other stampedes.

In the summer-time the homesteaders as well as the ranchers

took great pleasure in holding picnics at the mouth of the Little Bow, which was always a beautiful spot with lots of tall shady trees. Wild roses grew in abundance, and there were plenty of open grassy plots for games or for setting out lunch. These picnics were a real institution in the early days, and people came in democrats, buggies, wagons, or on saddle-pony, for many miles around. Cars were conspicuous by their absence. I seem to remember Bert Spencer having one, and the McNabbs when they were out in summer. Races of all kinds were popular, and children's pony races. The young women who were good with horses would have a buggy race—having to harness their horse in the buggy before starting the race. Alice Bunn, Alma Spencer, Violet Sinclair, and other big girls ready to leave school were among those who took part.

When Jim Matthews and Susan Koenen were married we gave them a surprise party. This was not an uncommon practice, but the way we furnished the chickens for supper was certainly not usual. We sent Jim to get Mr. Hanson to play for the dance and promised to see that the chicken supper was prepared. While he was away we killed enough of his chickens for a good feed, which he enjoyed as much as anyone, all unaware of where the chickens had come from. Being a good-humoured fellow he did not take it badly.

After cars became more common Jim bought one in Lethbridge one day—I think it was a Ford (Model T). Never a timid soul, he decided to drive it home although he had no experience. But he kept nicely in the middle of the road and all went well till he got to his own gate. Now he wanted to get out and open it, but he had forgotten how to stop the car. So in his perplexity he just yelled "Whoa", as he had so often done with his team of white mules. Of course the car kept on going, but I don't remember that either Jim or the car suffered much harm.

The long hot summer was broken early in August by heavy rain and hail on the north side of the river. Russian thistles began to grow rank and green, and late summer wild flowers began to bloom. A three-day snowstorm marked the first of September. The snow quickly disappeared and warm days returned. The earth was fresh and green again. Then one day,

on the north side of the river, there appeared an invading army moving steadily westward. It was one of the oddest armies one could imagine. Thousands, maybe millions, of little green worms covered the ground; all travelling in the same direction. They stopped for nothing, nothing turned them aside from their course. If it was a rock they went over it. If it was a house they would climb steadily up the wall, over the roof, down the opposite side, and keep on going. Many managed to crawl inside through doors and windows, up the wall and over the ceiling, always headed west. It kept the women pretty busy killing all that got inside, and it must have been about ten days before the last of the army had gone. In their line of march not a blade of green was left, nothing but bare stalks.

During the fall of 1914 I found Mrs. Beiswanger's buggy horse (in reality he was a decrepit, broken-down, moth-eaten saddle-pony) quite an ally in getting better acquainted with my future wife. It seems Mrs. Beiswanger had driven Billy in the buggy while she and the new school teacher went visiting. With Billy they had driven as far as Deck Green's in Turin, and the other way as far as the Ole Benson farm at Commerce. Probably the poor horse had made the best speed he could, but the two women protested that their arms were sore from plying the whip in order to get a burst of speed from him. Now I happened to be at the Beiswanger house one day just before some special event was coming up in Commerce, and Miss Matheson remarked how much nicer it would be if they didn't have to drive old Billy. I rose to the bait by saying that I could drive them with my horse and buggy if it could be on a Sunday morning. And Sunday it was to the satisfaction of all concerned. And I drove the ladies, with Billy no doubt being very happy at home in the pasture.

Miss Matheson went to Edmonton to visit her sister over the Christmas and New Year holidays, and just after the New Year I visited my sister in Swift Current, leaving Win Dickout to look after the chores for a few days.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

ON THE HOME FRONT

HORSES FROM neighbouring ranches were in demand for overseas remounts for the Canadian cavalry during the fall and winter of 1914-1915. During this time George Brady and myself broke quite a number for this purpose; two in particular I remember. One I called Snake because he was quick and nervous; one I called Baldy because he had a "bald" or white face. I was not using spurs on Snake, and when I was going up to put him through his paces in front of the English major who was the buyer, I slipped my spurs into a friend's pocket thinking the buyer would not notice. But he did, and asked me why I took them off. I told him the truth—that I was scared to use them with that horse. At once he turned him down but, as he was a good looker and a pretty bay, the police wanted him. After measuring him they took him for more money. Then the next morning they put a rookie on him. Snake piled the rookie and broke his collar-bone. Even the police rough-rider could not do much with him after that, and they broke him to work as they had a mate for him. They used him for years on the police prison road-wagon.

Baldy they would not take because he was too straight in the hind legs. As Jack Bulmer (to whom he belonged) wanted him to be kept working, he left him with me for the winter. When I was first breaking him on one Sunday morning, I was riding him out and he started to pitch slowly, then rougher as he went along. And I got battered pretty badly by the saddle-horn which I was sitting on. Then he threw me.

George went and caught him, bringing him back, and kidding me about being bucked off. He asked me if I was going to ride him again, and I told him I was in no shape then to ride a bad horse. The next morning he asked me again, and I



told him I was still unable to ride. So he said he was not going to wait any longer, but would ride himself. I advised him against it as Baldy would surely pile him. And when he insisted,

I told him I would go along on a gentle horse to catch his mount after he was bucked off. After George had mounted Baldy walked a few steps towards the house, then turned east towards a line of machinery against a fence. He started bucking gently, but getting worse and worse. After passing the machinery he headed towards a ploughed field where he dumped George off in the summer fallow. I went and caught Baldy. Then George asked for my spurs, and bent the rowel of the spur over a wagon wheel with a hammer, thus locking the spurs so that they could not turn in the shank. When he got on Baldy again he threw his feet out as far as possible, and quickly socked them into the horse's side. Baldy got such a fright he gave one great jump and started to run, running hard till George considered he had enough exercise for that day. I do not remember that he ever gave us much trouble bucking after that, and in the spring Jack sold him to one of the Iron Springs homesteaders (if I remember aright).

Crop-growing conditions were very favourable in the spring of 1915, and the Canadian Government had asked the homesteaders to grow more wheat, and still more wheat. I put in all the tillable land on my own and mother's quarters, also ninety acres on the Poole quarter nearby. Mr. Poole, an Englishman who never had done much farming, was very glad to have me crop it on shares. Then right between my mother's quarter and my own was the former Cliff Larson quarter, which had been farmed for the past few years by William Whitely, who was a brother of Mrs. Tom MacDonald and had come from Ontario. He was a skilled carpenter, and had been doing much work on the building of the one-room district schools. Now he felt there was a better opening at Coaldale, newly under irrigation. He wanted to sell his quarter but no buyer seemed available at that time, so he leased it to me on crop shares for one year. He had built a neat little bungalow frame house on the quarter, and his wife (a very pleasant, kindly woman) told my fiancée that they were going to leave it as neat and clean as a new pin when they moved, in case we should want to marry and move in during the year. She was as good as her word; she and her daughter Erna left the house in good shape when they moved away. Soon I had this quarter in crop too,

and everything looked promising. Like all my neighbours I was planning on what I could do with a good crop. I was thinking of putting up a small house on my own quarter and perhaps we might be married in early fall, even if my bride kept on teaching till Christmas as she wished to do.

An incident that spring had caused her considerable wonder and surprise. One morning a member of the Mounted Police called at her boarding-place and asked to see her. He questioned her on where she had been the evening before, what she had been doing, and whom she had been with. At first she resented the questioning as being too personal, but decided she would give him the information he was after. As it happened, she and I had spent a long evening at the Arthur Jones home, having been specially invited for the occasion. The young student pastor of the Methodist church had also been invited, and as he was a very fine violin player, and Miss Matheson accompanied him on the piano, it had been quite a musical occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Jones were both very fond of music, and good singers as well. Therefore, following lunch and a leisurely drive home with horse and buggy, it was after midnight when we got home. She did not know till later that the police were checking on my whereabouts, having been told by someone that I had been seen with a party driving stolen horses the night before. As it happened I could not have had a better alibi.

The sun shone, and the crops grew high, and the good rains came. The rains were general and in one place, Grassy Lake, much damage was done by a tornado on June 25th. Several members of one family there were killed.

We did not experience the same cyclone, but very heavy wind followed by floods of rain. Every hollow and coulee was running wild for the time being. One of the Brady boys and I had been across the Little Bow that day bringing back some horses from the John Williams place for breaking. We got home in the evening, and I began to wonder if Win Dickout had got home from across the river where he was herding the mares with young colts. I jumped on Dick, my old gray saddle-horse, and went down to Coes where I found out Win had not come home yet. As the evening was so wet and stormy, I thought I had better ride down and see where he was—perhaps help him

bring the horses across the bridge. I made a short-cut to where I could see the river more quickly by going over a "hog-back" and across the mouth of a big coulee below mother's place. But I had not reckoned on the amount of water that was flooding down the coulees to the river. In following a path that led across the draw Dick and I suddenly found ourselves in "swimming water". It was rushing so fast that he was carried downstream when he was swept off his feet. The stream there was about twenty feet wide and perhaps ten feet deep, with a very strong current. He was carried down through a cut with very steep sides, and I was still wearing my awkward slicker on account of the day being so wet. When Dick made an attempt to scramble out I was just able to catch hold of some bushes and, hanging on to the hackamore rope, I followed him down and helped him up the bank when we reached a better place. I lost one of my spurs in the tussle, but we were both lucky to escape alive. As soon as I reached the bridge I found Win bringing home the horses and helped him get them home. The rain continued unabated over the next day and on into the following morning. All this was wonderful for the growing crops which had never in my memory showed such promise.

Later in July—it was the 23rd, I think—a narrow strip of hail hit our part of the district. It utterly destroyed my own crop and what I had on the Whitely place. I can truly say these crops were pounded into the ground. But what I had on the Poole place escaped and later yielded well.

After dinner that day I had gone to Bert Wyman's to sharpen some ploughshares for my summer fallowing, and I was on my way home when a big ragged cloud rolled down out of the north-west. I was driving a big dark-brown mare called Lady in the open buggy. My road ran north and south and big hail-stones were hitting the mare on the rump. Though she was well-broken she was very full of life and the pelting of the hail kept turning her to the left of the prairie trail and into the fence. Some extra big stones landed on her rump and she began to run as fast as she could. At last I pulled her sharply toward the fence and she stopped and dropped her head without wrecking the buggy. Then I could keep her facing east away from the storm. When I was getting out of the buggy I

noticed that my mother's umbrella had been left there. I thought that would be the very thing to protect Lady's head, so I opened it up, intending to hold it over both Lady's head and mine. Hardly had I opened it up when the hailstones came right through the cloth, riddling it like paper. It didn't prove to be any help after all. As I stood by her head trying to calm her I was able to shelter my own head and neck, more or less, in her shade. After the storm had passed and I reached the corner where I should turn east, I went in to the George Hobbs place. Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs and their son, Bert, looked in amazement at the sight I was, wet and dilapidated, and my back as red as a beet though the skin was not broken.

That storm definitely put an end to any plans I had made for building that fall. Instead of harvesting a good crop which would provide the price of building materials, I would be helping someone else harvest and later be out threshing with my bundle-teams to make as much as possible before winter came. So, considering we had a good house available on the Whitely quarter, we decided, after talking it over, to be married during the next few weeks before most of the farmers started harvesting and threshing.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE FARMER TAKES A WIFE

IT WAS a beautiful afternoon—calm, cloudless, and warm—when we drove to Lethbridge to be married. Because 1915 had been such a rainy season the landscape around was still green and beautiful, and the heat was not too great. I was driving Lady, all slick and shining, in my single buggy. So we made good time and early in the evening arrived at the home of the minister with whom I had made arrangements for the wedding. We had no attendants, and I cannot say I felt nervous during the ceremony when Ernest Herbert Falkland Warren and Sara Evangeline Matheson were pronounced man and wife in the quiet parlour of a little manse in Lethbridge on August 4th, 1915. But I must say it gave me a considerable start when I first heard the minister and his wife address my bride as "Mrs. Warren" as they extended their best wishes to her.

When we went out to supper we found at a table close by a couple of our neighbours, one of whom was George Koenen. They were quite surprised at our news as we had kept our plans fairly quiet until the last day or so. This was easy to do as there were no shower parties then in our part of the world, but my wife's pupils presented her with some nice gifts. Outstanding among these was a silver fruit-basket (gold-lined) from the four Nolan children who were attending school—Bessie, Joe, Bill, and Florence.

We spent a two-day honeymoon in and around Lethbridge, and my wife continued with her teaching the next week. Like so many one-room schools Battersea was closed during the most severe weather, as practically all the pupils lived more than half-a-mile from the school, travelling by democrat, saddle-pony, or on foot. For this reason the trustees liked to have school

during favourable weather, and my wife was quite willing to teach till Christmas. With school for five days of the week, it was necessary for us to buy our furniture and set up our house-keeping over the first convenient Saturday and Sunday.

On a clear hot Saturday morning we started off, bright and early, with a team and bundle-rack. I drove my best matched team, Flaxie and Punch, a pair of fine heavy sorrels. We had a spring seat up in front that we might be as comfortable as possible over the long miles of rough prairie trail. All in all we were not able to travel too fast, particularly as the day was getting very warm. Down the hill north of the Nolan Bridge, across the bridge and the open miles of C.P.R. land, and through Crystal Lake, we finally came out by the Co-op. store and school in North Lethbridge (it was always called North Ward then). To save our time we had taken our midday lunch with us, so wasted no time before getting started on our buying spree. Most of the stores we visited for house furnishings were on Third Avenue and Fifth Street, and we went back and forth comparing prices on what we needed. We must have used up a lot of shoe-leather that day as we looked at dining-tables and chairs, china cabinets, kitchen cabinets, small kitchen ranges, bedroom sets of bed, bureau, and washstand, kitchen tables, curtains, rugs, window-shades, dishes, tubs, pots, pans, cutlery, wash-boiler, pails, and I can't remember how much else. Some of our furniture was the new Mission style then in vogue. We got three nice pieces in A.1 shape second-hand. They were a kitchen cabinet in light finish, a dark oak Mission dining-table, and a buffet with fine large mirror. We bought new a half-dozen plain straight dining-room chairs in dark oak, and I remember my wife saying, "They'll do for a couple of years till we can get better ones!" We are still using four of them in our dining-room. Somehow we use them more and like them better than the more attractive (though not so durable) ones we got several years later. There were many necessary furnishings we did not need to buy, having received them as wedding presents from our two families. And my wife had a good supply of embroidered linens and bedding of her own. A most welcome and unexpected wedding gift which I must not forget to mention was a very large Family Bible from my Grandmother Coe

and my Aunt Ruby, which still keeps its place of honour in our living-room.

A couch and magazine stand for the living-room, full set of dishes, silver, and carving set from relatives were among the gifts, and several kitchen utensils were supplied by my mother.

We really worked hard that long hot August day; picking and choosing, buying, and stowing away in our bundle-rack. We paid cash for everything we bought, which must sound very strange to most of young people today. It was almost sunset before we were ready to start for home, and by this time we were good and hungry. Before we left town we bought what we felt like eating on the way home. And it was two very tired people that reached the empty house before midnight. We dragged a mattress out of the rack and put it out on the floor to sleep on overnight. After we made our breakfast Sunday morning, we unloaded the furniture (rather a slow job), and spent the rest of the day getting things more or less to rights. As I said before, Mrs. Whitely had left the house in apple-pie order, but weeks and months of dust and sand had gathered on windows, sills, and floors. So I had been spending some of my spare time the week before in cleaning up what had accumulated, so that the furniture could be put into place immediately. The house was four-room: living-room, kitchen, and two small bedrooms. The bedroom suite just about filled the larger one, and the small one held a single cot, with my wife's trunk serving as a table there. The small kitchen on the north was just about big enough for our kitchen cabinet, our small black kitchen range, and a kitchen chair or two. Our living-room we used as a dining-room too. It had nice windows facing east and south, and attractive wallpaper. We put a large tapestry rug (green with miniature roses around the border) in the centre of the room, where we had the extension dining-table. On one side of the room was the buffet on top of which we set out our best china and other knick-knacks. Frilly curtains at the windows, frilled cover on living-room couch, and fumed oak magazine stand, together with our six tall dining-chairs completed the picture. The first time my grandmother called she thought it looked very cheery and inviting. "Just like a doll's house," she said.

For a milk supply I had broken in a gentle young cow the spring before and had been keeping her at my mother's place. Our supply of vegetables came from here, there, and all over as we had no garden of our own. I had put in some potatoes in my mother's garden, and she gave us liberally of her pumpkins and vegetable marrows. Hazel MacDonald gave us as many peas and other late summer vegetables as we wanted to pick; they were in her garden beside the Picture Butte Post Office. Maudie Poole brought us some saskatoons she had picked in the coulee, and our nearest neighbours, the Hobbs and Landrys, gave us freely from their gardens.

No sooner had we got settled in our new home when the neighbours and their wives come to give us a house-warming. When we got back after the wedding some of them approached me and said they would prefer a house-warming party to a shivaree (charivari) if I would just let them know when we were settled and ready. The ladies, mindful of the fact that my wife was teaching every day as well as keeping house, were good enough to bring all kinds of eats along with them. Prominent among the ladies was Mrs. E. P. Kane, who as Mrs. King had come from U.S.A., taught in Iron Springs and taken up a homestead as well. I think, too, she had been a leading spirit in organising the first Young People's Literary Society in Iron Springs. Among the men present I remember George Pearson, who was quite in the forefront in extending best wishes to us. He also sang a couple of rollicking songs from memory. Later George made quite a reputation for himself as a man who worked hard to get irrigation for the Lethbridge Northern district. I was a member of the Iron Springs U.F.A. of that day (which was a flourishing organisation with a big membership roll), and at their next meeting they presented us with a nice eight-day clock in marbled gold finish and suitably engraved.

Toward the end of the school term my wife bought a Willis piano from a Mr. Salmon, who was touring the country to make piano sales after a good crop year. Three months before it had been purchased new by a Mr. and Mrs. Palmer in the city, who had made a large cash payment at the time. Now Mr. Palmer had joined the active forces and his wife wished to break up housekeeping, being without any family. She turned the piano

back to the company who made my wife a very attractive offer in price, as she intended to pay cash for the instrument. A piano, for her, was nothing in the way of a luxury as she had always made a hobby of her music. And with the end of the school term there would be much more spare time for playing. How to get the piano out to the farm was my problem for a few days as I did not want to move it either in wagon or bundle-rack. But the problem was easily solved when the company lent me a piano-wagon to bring it out.

An incident that brought a smile took place when she was driving to school with the Nolan children one day in September. Their older sister, Gladys, as a bride, had moved in the fall of 1914 (one of a group of disgusted and discouraged settlers from Turin and Iron Springs) to McBride in British Columbia, where they planned to establish new homes. But the heavily wooded country was so different from the prairie that they returned when news reached them of the good crops in 1915. Now Gladys and her husband were back home, and young Bill (her brother) said in much excitement, "Teacher, what do you think? We got a new baby at our place last night! We're going to call him Tommy Cyril." And sure enough they did call him just that—Cyril being the name used for every day, so that he was not confused with his grandfather, Tom Nolan. When he grew up Cyril married a granddaughter of Sam Brady and today he is one of the leading citizens of the Iron Springs district.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

NEXT YEAR'S COUNTRY

ALREADY OUR part of Southern Alberta was beginning to be called "Next Year's Country". After being hailed out except for ninety acres on crop shares, it was my lot to go threshing once that was harvested. The Coaldale district across the river had escaped the hail. I got on with a real good outfit that kept regular hours from six in the morning till seven in the evening. As we were using a steam engine we had plenty of hot water in the morning for washing up, which was very convenient after working with gas engines. It was a compound steam Reeves engine, one of the largest made, and we had a 42 x 72 Red River Separator. We threshed at John Thom's, and Pete La Valley's, as well as other farms around with bumper crops. The crops were simply wonderful and I made good money. The outfit had twelve bundle teams, four spike-pitchers, a cook-car, and a bunk-car. I had three bundle teams on the outfit. Walsh Norman drove one, young Bill Noble another, and I drove the third myself.

January weather was very severe that winter, and there was plenty of snow. My wife's sister, Alice, who was working in Molson's Bank in Edmonton, came down to spend her three weeks' holiday with us. She came by train, getting off at Coaldale, the nearest station. I met her with my low home-made sleigh, equipped with foot-warmer, blankets, and cow-hide, and wearing moccasins under my overshoes. After my long outdoor ride in the cold, and bundled to the ears in my winter outfit, I guess I looked more like a bear than anything else. However, we all managed to do a bit of visiting and attend a few small parties while she was with us. She was fond of skating, and one bright frosty day she and I (but not my wife) were brave

enough to try skating on the river. My, but it was rough! I never found out whether she enjoyed it or not. Just before she started back the last of January a group of young people from Iron Springs, made up of the Bradys and the Arthurs, came over in a big sleigh to give her a farewell party. It was a bitterly cold night, 55 below after midnight.

We had a small, flat-topped, pot-bellied heater in the living-room, and to be comfortable at all I had to keep stoking it with coal all night. The kitchen range was going full blast too. That same night we came close to losing everything by fire, but the stoves were not the cause. One of the boys caught a lighted cigarette in a hand-towel on a little rack over the hand-basin and set it ablaze. For a second no one saw what had happened, then the muslin curtain beside it was flaring like a tinder. Quick as a wink I tore down the curtain and nothing else caught. That was the only loss, but it gave most of us a bad fright.

When February came in the weather moderated and the snow went. By the fourteenth the ground was dry enough for me to be out ploughing. And that day the ice in the river went out with a roar that we could hear plainly though it must have been a mile distant. Valentine Day was very bright and balmy. Win Dickout was still working at Coe's, and in the afternoon a neighbour boy rode over from Iron Springs to tell Win of his father's sudden passing. His father, Tom Dickout, had been one of the pioneers from Manitoulin. Lest I give a false impression, the winter was not yet altogether over, and stormy days were still ahead.

Although it had not been a part of my own plans I made a trip to Vanguard in Saskatchewan early that spring—early, so that I might be back before it was time to go on the land. It came about in this way. My sister-in-law, who had been teaching in Alberta for a couple of years, went back East in the fall of 1915 leaving two horses with friends at Vanguard until she should return. Now she had decided to stay in the east and had written asking me to bring the horses back to Alberta to sell them. I had intended to ride her saddle-horse back, so took single ticket by C.P.R. to Swift Current. There I found I would have to take a livery team to Vanguard. When I arrived at the farm I found she had been allowed to stray away, and no one

knew where I could find her, though her colt was still around. There were no near neighbours, no one that could give me any information in my search. I could do nothing more than arrange that the man, in whose care she had been left, should sell her for the best price he could get once he had located her. The colt was not then in saleable shape, so I left him there. The trip proved both expensive and disappointing, and when finally sold the animals brought hardly enough to pay expenses. The weather turned very cold and stormy before I got home again, and I doubt whether I should have been able to ride the mare back if I had found her.

As soon as the light land had dried out Henry Charter, of Rosemead, a friend I had known well for some time as he often stopped at my mother's place going back and forth to Lethbridge, asked me to put in his farm quarter. He himself was busy with his store and other community projects. He put up the first dance hall in that part of the country, and it was in use for several years. Mr. Charter supplied the needed machinery and I took over six or seven of my horses. I double-disked the land before sowing it to wheat. I had a spell of very fine weather for the job and made good time, getting it all in crop in less than a week. While I was away a young girl, Grace Brady, stayed with my wife for company.

Before I went to Rosemead I had done quite a bit of ploughing on the east side of the Whitely place, which I had rented for a second year. When I came home I got most of my own crop in before the hoped-for wet weather should set in. The wet weather in May was all that could be hoped for by the most anxious of farmers. And everyone was hoping for another bumper crop as in 1915. In most cases it was a hope fulfilled—some crops were even better. The rains started early in May, and in our particular corner of the south it rained almost without let-up. The May 24th sports day, picnic, and dance was rained out completely. All roads were dirt roads, and could not have been softer or muddier.

It was at this time we looked for the arrival of our first-born. I had not only made arrangements for a doctor from Lethbridge but arranged with Art Warren, of Turin (who had one of the first cars in our district) to bring him out. A practical nurse,

Mrs. Gibson, was staying with my wife during the last few days, and I had hired a young woman to cook for me and my farm-hand, Clifford Brady, while my wife was laid up. At six o'clock in the morning of May 30th I sent Art Warren to Lethbridge, and as I knew the winding river hill would be very bad, I sent Clifford with a snatch team to help pull the car up the hill. The doctor arrived in good time—in fact before the need for him was at all urgent. And then occurred one of those unfortunate incidents that sometimes take place when two appointments overlap. The doctor had an appointment to meet his wife at the train in Lethbridge at noon, and figured it would take him from two to three hours to get back. For this reason the birth was hurried to such an extent that for a time he expressed doubt as to whether he could save mother or child. However, both survived. The child (a husky boy weighing from eight to nine pounds) was very miserable for a few weeks, until the anaesthetic was out of his system. Then he became healthy and happy. The mother, though she had always before enjoyed good health, was in critical condition for some weeks, but with the help of extra trained nurses she turned the corner and slowly came back to health and strength. While we had put aside what we considered a sufficient figure to pay doctor and nurse, the hiring of an extra trained nurse on 24-hour duty for a couple of weeks was a very heavy added expense. After the most critical stage of her illness had passed Bessie Norman, a nurse and sister to Josh and Walsh Norman, stayed with her for several weeks, and never was anyone better with both mother and child. Bessie afterwards went to California where she married and made her home. As soon as she was able to be up and around, my wife started to do all her work again but she soon found it was too much for her. I hired a young woman nearby, but that did not prove satisfactory, as the housekeeping ways of the women were so different. Then with the housework and the care of the baby, as well as garden work coming up, I went to Lethbridge and hired a husky young girl about fourteen or fifteen who, I thought, would be able to do such things as washing, dishes, ironing, and weeding. Though Clifford had now gone I had another local boy, Arthur Norman, helping me with the farm work. When my wife asked our new

girl, a very stout and healthy person, if she could do washing, ironing, dishes, and other work around the house, she replied that she didn't know much about doing any kind of housework, but could look after the baby, get his bottle, and feed him. (She had told my wife that her parents had recently come to Canada, and she was used to helping her mother "bring up babies on the bottle"). My wife was very sure that looking after the baby was one thing she didn't trust to anyone else; she would look after that herself. In fact, she was so disgusted that she wanted me to take the girl right back to Lethbridge, but I reminded her that she had been hired for a month, and perhaps work might be found for her so that she might be of some help. And so she set her weeding the garden and potato patch, for which she herself lacked strength during the hot August days. One fine afternoon she walked out to the garden to see how the weeding was coming along, but nothing could be seen of the girl. My wife found her asleep in the shade of a row of tall potato plants. But worse was yet to come. One day, after the girl had been bending over the crib, my wife was horrified to see a big cootie in his hair. She was dumbfounded at first; it just wasn't possible! Then a thought came to her and she called the girl over. "Did you ever have any lice in your head?" "No!" was the answer, with great earnestness and in apparent astonishment. "Let me have a look!" she said, and parted the girl's hair. As she told me afterwards, "I lifted my fingers quick when I saw her hair was alive with lice and nits."

As soon as she saw me she told me to take the girl back home right away and call her time a month as agreed on. When she wondered whether she should make up some quassia chips for her I said, "No, I'll make her wash her head in coal oil!" Which I did right then. In the morning I took her back to Lethbridge, paying her for a month.

As I said earlier, my wife's critical illness following the birth of our son added greatly to our expenses, exceeding the sum of money we had set aside for that event. Now, although she was still far below par in strength, she decided to try and get along by herself with what help I had time to give her. I was fortunate at this time to get a real good man by the name of Arthur Conway. He came from another province, was very

reliable, and even helped amuse the baby on occasion. Cool, cloudy weather with frequent rains continued on into September, and the crops were a picture.

That summer for the first time I met W. A. Buchanan, of the *Lethbridge Herald*, when he addressed a picnic at Iron Springs sponsored by the local U.F.A. He proved a most interesting and entertaining speaker.

When it was time to plan for threshing some of us began to wonder if the few threshing-rigs in the district could handle our big yields before the snow began to fly. Rather than wait during the fine autumn days we decided—George Hobbs, George Brady, myself, and another Picture Butte farmer—to purchase a rig and start threshing our own big crops, as well as those of several neighbours who did not want to wait too long. I can say now that we were all too optimistic on the matter in view of our lack of experience. In fact, rash, in that we did not stop to total up what difficulties we were more than likely to come up against. We had a separator available, and arranged for a second-hand engine from a machinery company. Before the engine arrived one of our number backed out of the deal, leaving three of us to carry on. However, we still had high hopes of doing well as we had our own bundle-teams and racks and a cook-car. We had secured an engineer for the gas engine, and I was going to look after the separator. Some of the homesteaders around were working for us—those who wished us to do their threshing. The other men we needed we got from Lethbridge, also the cook for the cook-car, and they charged plenty. It was a great disappointment to us that the weather continued cold and rainy, and worse still, everything seemed to go wrong with the engine, whether the fault of the engineer or the engine I will never know. Between one or the other I do not think we got in one full day's work while we had that engine. Meanwhile the men of the crew were lying around idle, the grub bill in the cook-car was mounting, and the bundle-teams stood around eating extravagantly of oat bundles and threshed oats. As I was among the first to be threshed my crop returns were rapidly melting away in running expenses during the time we were not "running". At last, following our ceaseless complaints to the company from whom we had bought the

engine, they agreed to replace it with another second-hand one which had just been overhauled. They sent a good man down from Calgary with it, Clarence MacLaughlin, who hailed from Nova Scotia. After travelling all night he arrived very early in the morning just in time to have an early breakfast with us.

From that time on the threshing went much better though the days were now getting short and the mornings cold. "Mac" stayed, as we hired him to run the engine. Soon after this I caught my sleeve in a pulley belt while oiling the separator one morning. When I tore clear I sprained my wrist badly and broke most of the bones in the back of my hand. I told the doctor I thought I had a broken arm, but he could not find any broken bones there. It was much later when he discovered the broken bones in the back of my hand. However my arm was in such shape I could do nothing as a separator man or handling sheaves. It seemed best to me to sell out my share in the outfit to McLaughlin, who at that time was looking for some kind of a permanent business in the south. Together with George Hobbs (who was the only one left of the original four), he threshed well up to Christmas-time, and they found the later part of the season quite profitable. As for me, as soon as my hand and arm allowed me to work, I dug my potatoes, of which I had a big crop that year. While very busy at this work one afternoon, I gave a real scare to a collection agent who came looking for payment on an old debt. He found me busy gathering in a huge heap I had dug by hand earlier in the day. He was very arrogant and insistent in his demands, the while I utterly ignored him. I yelled "Get going!" as I picked up some farm tools in my hand. He did in great haste.

At Christmas time we went by train up to Phoenix, B.C., where my wife's brother was vice-principal of a large school—ten rooms or more. This mining town, which has been a ghost town for so many years, was then at its peak of prosperity. It had several thousand inhabitants, and boasted stores, churches, and theatres. It was something different from anything I had ever seen, with its deep snows and hundreds ski-ing on the long slopes. High up on the side of the "glory-hole," it was something to remember! The train trip was something to remember too, for we travelled very slowly and a minor wreck

(resulting from a broken engine), held us up for several hours. This meant arriving at the boat at 1 a.m., and staying in Nelson overnight. The climb from Eholt Junction to Phoenix was very steep and very slow. My brother-in-law and I walked over to Greenwood one day, and I never walked in deeper snow. It was so different from the icy hills and frozen ground we travelled over when leaving Alberta. Charlie Green had driven us to Lethbridge in his new Model T.

The years 1915 and 1916 began to see a great improvement in the homestead buildings. Little makeshift shacks gave place to attractive houses of good size often with cement basements. The ideal house of that era had several good-sized rooms both on first and second floors, often large windows leaded in colours in the front, and with verandas and balcony front and back. A few were building large houses in the "hip-roof" style such as were being used in the more up-to-date barns.

When I paid Mr. Whitely his crop share that autumn he asked me once more if I would be interested in buying him out. I told him I was thinking of buying a piece of land farther west where the soil was not so light, but I told him "Mac" might be interested in buying it as he wanted to settle in the south. For my part, if I could sell my own quarter, I was much inclined to buy some of the land formerly held by the Kerr Development Company, as E. P. Kane, Jack Graham, Jack Keopke, and several other farmers were doing. MacLaughlin bought the Whitely quarter and was much pleased to take my adjoining land also.

So I found myself in the early days of 1917 very busy looking for a suitable piece of land. I don't know how many days I spent in Lethbridge following up leads that proved discouraging until close to the end of March, when I met a very fine American, Mr. Bowman, who being up in years and childless, wanted to sell the half-section he had bought as a speculation. From him I bought the north half of Section 11-11-21, West of the Fourth, at thirty-five dollars an acre with all taxes paid to date. I was to pay on a crop-payment plan, with interest at six per cent. I signed the agreement with him quite satisfied with the transaction, and never once dreaming of the dry years ahead. The half-section was all virgin prairie except for a

small acreage. It was enclosed with a good wire fence but there were no buildings. My first task was to build a home where we might live while I was putting in the crop. There was no one living nearer than two miles away, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Oliver and family had moved on the Dr. MacLure farm not long before. Across the road from me on the south-west was the Ralph Kramer shack, but no one lived there except during the summer. A little while before I had bought this half-section I suffered quite a serious loss in my horse-herd. I had a fine young Percheron stallion called Bill, which I had bought from George Sorgard. He was broke to work, and I considered him the best of my horses. One evening Art Conway, who was still with me, returned from Coaldale where he had been hauling wheat with a four-horse outfit and tank. He stabled the horses as usual and had come in to supper. We had just set in at the table when we were startled by a terrific kicking and pounding in the horse-barn. We both ran out and saw that Bill was down. I ran back for a lantern. When I got back I found he was on his back in the stall, stone-dead, and swollen up like a small mountain. While we stood there stunned, wondering what it was all about, my best mare Flaxie began to act strangely, as though she had acute colic. Quickly we led her out of the stable and spent many hours of the night riding and leading her up and down the road. For this we had to use the whip freely, and she was a mighty sick animal, but we managed to save her. But poor Flaxie had suffered permanent injury; from that time on the joints of her legs were stiff. Art could think of no reason for the sudden attack, though Flaxie and Bill had eaten from the same serving when he had put out their noon feed as usual on the ground. The other two horses, Punch and Scotty, showed no ill effects though we watched them carefully for a couple of days. We decided Bill had died of acute colic, perhaps from eating oats straw which was plentiful about the place.

If you could see that half-section today with its groves, gardens, wide ditches and cement drops, you would never recognise it for the bare plain with its dun-coloured carpet of prairie grass that I first saw in 1917. I had not a single house in sight, north, south, or east. Only the high rocky eleva-

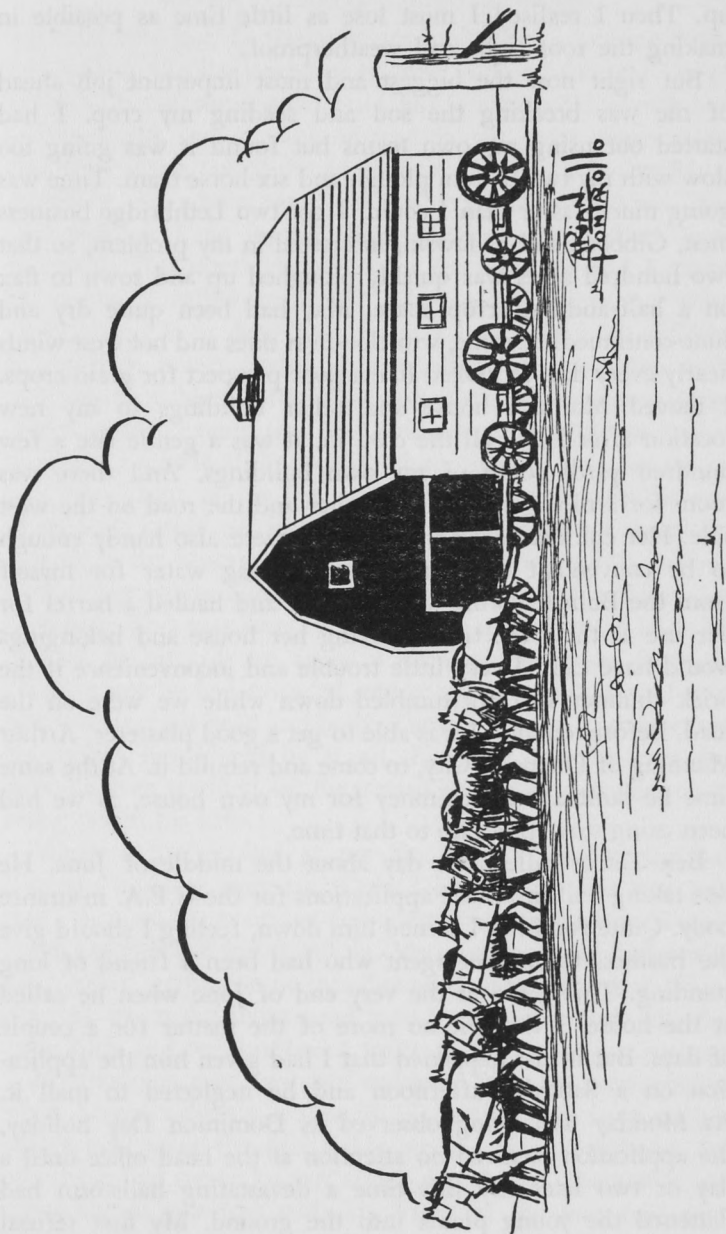
tion known as Picture Butte broke the monotony of the skyline.

Because I wanted to be working on the land in April I was in haste to build. I already had considerable good lumber from a bunk-house I had torn down, and I also bought some new lumber from the Becker Lumber Company in Lethbridge. As I had neither car nor truck in those days I hauled the lumber with team and wagon as I came to work each day. When most of the hauling was done, and I had put up enough shelter to remain there on fine days, I sometimes managed to save on time by staying overnight. The road I travelled from home extended seven miles west, around the Malloy coulee, and then two miles north to where I was building on the corner of the two road intersections. I put up a four-room house, 24ft. by 24ft., with space on the second floor for two bedrooms. The roof had a very sharp pitch, much sharper than I had intended when I planned the building. When Bert Wyman saw it for the first time he asked me what was the idea. Whether I was trying to split the hailstones when they fell? I dug a small dirt cellar to house our vegetables, and put the whole building on big square timbers in case I wanted to change its location later. Most of the time I worked by myself, and before too long had the house closed in with rough lumber, roof shingled, and tar-paper on the outside. When the windows, doors, and partitions were installed we moved in.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

ROUGHING IT ON THE "DO-IT-YOURSELF" PLAN

I THINK it was on the nineteenth of April, a very fine mild afternoon, when we moved ourselves and all our belongings to the new location. I had already piled all our furniture except the piano on a big rack, and in the wagon which I was trailing behind. These I drove myself, while my wife drove the buggy in which she had the baby and his carriage and whatever else we could load in there. Too bad we had no camera or we could have taken a picture of our caravan as we started out on our nine-mile jaunt! I took Art back with me when I went back later to get the chickens, milk cow, and whatever stock was still left there. Although the evening was fine, we found it chilly and draughty in the new house, but soon managed to get a stove up and a fire going. We soon found a place for our furniture the next day in the bare unfinished rooms, and managed to keep ourselves comfortable. Next Sunday was a lovely day and we had a first call from our new neighbours. Mr. and Mrs. Ben Talbot, who lived about five or six miles north-west of us, were out for a drive in their car, and called for a few minutes to make our acquaintance. They were fine people and our friends from that time on. During the next week I moved an open granary and a few other small buildings I had put up myself. The next Sunday we had a heavy wet snow-storm, and we found we could not keep the water from dripping through into our rooms. For one thing there was no ridge-pole on the roof as yet. There was quite a strong wind, and the drifting snow seemed to find dozens of little crevices where it could drift in. So the water seemed to be dripping, dripping everywhere. We set out all the cans and pans and pails avail-



up. Then I realised I must lose as little time as possible in making the roof tight and weatherproof.

But right now the biggest and most important job ahead of me was breaking the sod and seeding my crop. I had started out using my own teams but found it was going too slow with my two-bottom plough and six-horse team. Time was going much faster than I could. I got two Lethbridge business men, Gibbons and Sadowski, interested in my problem, so that two hundred acres was quickly ploughed up and sown to flax on a half-and-half crop share. May had been quite dry and June continued the same, with cloudless skies and hot west winds nearly every day. It looked like a poor prospect for grain crops. I moved Mother's house and other buildings to my new location after I had all the crop in. It was a gentle rise a few hundred yards south of my own buildings. And there was room for a nice garden between her and the road on the west side. Her chicken-house and chickens were also handy enough to be convenient for her. I was hauling water for myself from the Bulmer spring all this time, and hauled a barrel for her use at the same time. Moving her house and belongings would have caused very little trouble and inconvenience if the brick chimney had not tumbled down while we were on the road. Before too long I was able to get a good plasterer, Arthur Manning of Diamond City, to come and rebuild it. At the same time he built a brick chimney for my own house, as we had been using stove-pipes up to that time.

Ben Talbot called one day about the middle of June. He was taking hail insurance applications for the U.F.A. insurance body. Quite foolishly I turned him down, feeling I should give the business to another agent who had been a friend of long standing. This I did at the very end of June when he called at the house. I thought no more of the matter for a couple of days. But it just happened that I had given him the application on a Saturday afternoon and he neglected to mail it. As Monday was being observed as Dominion Day holiday, the application received no attention at the head office until a day or two later. By this time a devastating hailstorm had flattened the young plants into the ground. My first refusal had proved a costly delay. The day the hail came was very

fine and very hot. In the early afternoon I was looking over a low spot on the south-west of my half, where I thought I might be able to cut some good wild hay. Perhaps I had not been watching the sky, so was amazed to see great storm clouds swooping down out of the north-west over Black Spring Ridge. Suddenly my whole world was blotted out with wind, rain, hail, and ice. I ran for the shelter of the Kramer shack across the road. The storm lasted only a few minutes and I started for home. I called at Mother's house and found not much damage had been done there. But things were a bit different at my own house. Seven large window panes on the north and west had been demolished and water was running everywhere inside. Archie was now thirteen months old and when the storm broke in all its fury smashing the windows, his mother had stood him in his big wooden crib and wheeled it over against an inside partition as far as possible from the floods coming in the broken windows. There he stood quietly without a whimper while she was busy mopping up the floors and furniture. This was how I found them, and when we had time to look in his crib we found a small sooty stream from the chimney nearby had cascaded into one end, and spattered some wet soot over his head and body. The child did not seem scared, but rather bewildered by it all. However for the next few days he was terrified of the sound of running water, or of being put in his bath.

When I had looked at my flax crop I notified the hail company and my partners. Then I learned for the first time that I had no insurance in force, and the reason why. To say I was angry is putting it mildly. My partners fared better with their policy, getting some two thousand dollars out of it. However the storm did more good than harm in the end. The flax came back and we threshed a fairly good crop in the autumn.

My thoughts were switched suddenly from my crop troubles when Archie suddenly became ill. He had suffered from a slight hernia ever since the first sickly weeks of his babyhood, but otherwise had never known a sick day. Now, whether or not connected in any way with his fright of the past few days, he developed a strangulated hernia. We took him to the Galt Hospital for surgery. Though the date set for the operation was

Thursday, July 12th, it was postponed till the morning of Friday the thirteenth. I do not think I am superstitious, nor is my wife. But I do not think she was too happy about the change in date. The operation was most successful. and he recovered very quickly. For the first few days his mother stayed in town at the Harry Cockle home, so as to be near him. But fortunately he did not make strange with his nurse, soon became attached to her and was quite happy. She was a very sweet-faced girl, and when his mother went in to bring him home he looked as if he were not quite sure whether he should leave his nurse's arms or not. Art Conway, who was still with me, had a small runabout and used to take us back and forth to the hospital, as I had no car then. On the way home that afternoon he ran into a small heifer feeding on the road (a prairie trail), near Commerce. But he was travelling so slowly that he did not even jar his passengers, and merely pushed the heifer to one side without hurting her. He did not stay with me much longer, as he wanted to go and work in the harvest in Saskatchewan, his native province.

During the months since I had moved some neighbours who were not too far distant had been putting up fine new buildings. Tom Wright was just finishing a fine new home. Jules Reck, who farmed with his parents north-east of us a few miles, put up a huge barn and other good buildings a couple of miles west on the east-west highway that passed our front door. Jack Bulmer's new wife was from the Maritimes and soon became acquainted with mine. These and the Oliver family were some of the newer friends that came to visit us. As did George Brady who, after some good crops, had bought himself a nice Grey-Dort car. I remember one Sunday afternoon he was taking us for a drive to Iron Springs. We were travelling pretty fast for those days down the slope of the high grade dirt road, when I noticed a car tire running down the road beside us on the right. George soon noticed it too. It was the tire off his right back wheel, and was making more speed than we were when we first caught sight of it.

With the help of the neighbours I had moved my big barn up to the new half-section on wagons. (The same neighbours were also very helpful when I had moved my mother's build-

ings earlier in the year). I should mention the potatoes I grew that summer on the land I had broken for gardens. I think they were the smallest spuds I have ever seen, and Ora Marler, the girl who helped my wife in the house the next spring, was simply disgusted with them every time she had to prepare them. The other vegetables we grew that summer were also few and small. I had no trouble about drinking water for the cattle and horses, slough water being available, but for the house I hauled water from Bulmer's spring with a water tank. We now found it convenient to get our mail and send for our groceries to Commerce which was still a thriving mining town. Many of our farmer friends from the north and east of us were continually passing our front door with loads of grain for the elevators at Commerce. They followed an angling prairie trail across sections of open grassland. Sometimes a strong wind from the south-west blew our belongings out along this trail, and one day Mr. Reck, with a load of wheat, stopped to deliver a wash-tub which he had picked up miles away. It was the same that my wife had hung on a nail outside the kitchen door the night before. The fence around the yard had been no help, though it was woven page wire.

I hired Clare Michener from the Calgary district to cut my flax which had ripened well, and was a heavy tangled mass. In fact I found he could not get it cut in time, with what horses and machinery I had, for MacLaughlin who was coming soon with his threshing outfit. So I hired some of the Oliver teams to help us, paying them back with farm work later. The flax threshed out pretty well—about seven bushels to the acre, I think. There were no better farming outfits in the country than Oliver's. He had splendid heavy teams, and good machinery. His two boys although not grown up were of the greatest help in his farming operations. Over a period of years they were our very good friends, and we greatly missed them when Mr. and Mrs. Henry Oliver retired from farming and went back to their home town of Brampton in Ontario. Mrs. Oliver was a real stand-by in the work of the Iron Springs church. She was organist and choir-leader for several years. The first ordained minister on a year-round basis was Rev. Sydney Pike, who first observed "Pioneers' Day" in 1917.

Clare had just started to cut the flax near the house and I was busy at something else nearby when we caught sight of Harry Dickout's four-horse team coming over the hill east of us, along the road north of our garden. They were driverless though harnessed to a full tank of grain. He had been hauling wheat to the elevator at Commerce, and just below the brow of the hill, while he walked beside his teams, he had stepped into a badger-hole on the hard road. He stumbled to the ground all spread out and let go of the lines. A wagon wheel had passed over his lower leg, mashing the bones in terrible shape. One of us ran and caught the driverless team. On going east over the hill we saw Harry and found that Jules Reck had just come up in his big MacLaughlin car and was trying to get the boot off his foot. We found the skin had been broken and blood was oozing out. I ran to the house to get a basin of water and some clean white cloths. We tried to fix it with splints or something of the kind, so that it would be in a straight position while we took him in the car to the doctor at Commerce. I went along to try and hold his leg in as easy a position as possible, yet he suffered very severely on the rough road. Doctor Inkrote found his leg in such shape that he had to pack it in ice for a few days. In consulting with other doctors some advised to amputate, but Doctor Inkrote stubbornly refused to let him lose the leg unless gangrene set in. So there in the hospital he lay for weeks, with the leg finally mending but slightly shorter than the other. The doctor then told him frankly how very lucky he was to have the leg at all. He limped for a long while, but was able to be an active worker on the railroad for many years. Probably retired by now, but I see him every once in a while when he comes south to visit relatives in Iron Springs.

In the autumn of 1917 I met Frank Cobb. He came from Prince Edward Island, and the Cobb and Matheson families had been well acquainted there. Frank had been living on a leased place about two miles west of us, and had done well with his crops in 1915 and 1916. Now he planned to auction off his effects and go back east to buy a farm for himself.

Among other things he sold a second-hand Ford car. It had just been overhauled and repainted and seemed to be in good

shape. It had a good top and fabric side-curtains. I bought it, paying about one hundred and seventy dollars, which I felt I could afford well enough as Mr. Bowman was looking for only a small payment in view of the fact that none of the land had been prepared for crop when I bought it. It had been handy having Art's runabout on the place while he was with us, and now the cold weather and long distances made a car more necessary. But I never had much satisfaction in using it because it was very stiff after its recent overhaul, and I had no suitable place to keep it during the colder weather. It was particularly hard to start on winter mornings, and sometimes impossible. Archie used to take great pleasure in seeing me use the crank, and early learned to grab it up and try to use it as I did whenever he got the chance. As I said, I was disappointed more than once in getting it started at all. I remember we were all going to spend the day at the home of some friends—a place where my mother particularly enjoyed the food. So she ate practically nothing in the morning, anticipating a good dinner. Still the car would not start. But hoping for the best she did not take any dinner to speak of. When it got really late in the evening I gave it up for a bad job, and we all had our supper at home. But usually our delays were not more than an hour or so. Finally I got fed up with trying to start it while standing outside and traded it off for a shabby-looking Ford runabout with open top. This one was easy to start and could get us places.

Now don't think that all this time I had forgotten to work on my unfinished house. I gave it all the odd hours I could spare. First the ridge on the roof had to be put in shape to keep out the weather. Then all the siding had to go on. There was a lot of work to that on a house 24ft. x 24ft. I used drop siding, thinking it would work best in our dry climate. And the inside of the house was all bare rafters which my wife, in particular, found depressing, and more like a porch or attic than the rooms of a house. Of course our curtains and rugs helped somewhat, doing something to lighten the bare bleak appearance of the walls and floors. But neither of us for a moment considered hiring any help in finishing the house even if it should take years—which it did. Eva, my wife, acted as

my assistant in the carpenter work, helping me in every way possible. In all things, work, care and economy were the order of the day. Our cows and chickens were our stand-by for groceries and running expenses of the household. We had our own meat, butter, and eggs, and often had extra butter to sell. We traded at Glasgow's for groceries, while Rogers' carried our hardware and furniture needs.

I lined the inside of the rooms with shiplap and this presented a smoother and more pleasant appearance than the rafters. That took quite a lot of time, there being four rooms and the ceilings. When I put the finish around the doors and windows I felt I could not spare the money for ready-planed stuff. I didn't have too many good carpenter tools at the time so there was a lot of work in planing and fitting this finish from rough boards. There was no chance of having the walls plastered even if I could have afforded it. And we decided to put wallpaper over the shiplap. Now came the question of how we could get the paper to stick close and firm over the shiplap. For a time we thought we could paste some heavy paper, like wrapping paper, firmly to the shiplap before putting on the wallpaper. We found the heavy paper would crack, and we discussed the problem with any neighbours who had ideas on the subject. In the end we decided to send to Eaton's mail order house for a bolt of cheese-cloth. Whenever we had time to work on the walls my wife would make a big pot of flour paste. It took us many an hour to measure, cut, tack, and paste this cheese-cloth firmly and smoothly over the shiplap in the four rooms, but it promised satisfaction. We had already ordered some cheap attractively-patterned wallpaper from the same mail order house, with white and silver paper for the ceilings. As the walls were only eight feet high, a matching border along the edge of the ceiling added to the apparent height of the walls. It took us many weeks rather than days to finish this work, but the change was well worth it.

Over the single rough flooring I had put down before we moved in, I put a second floor of smooth shiplap before winter set in. As yet the upstairs had not been touched. I had not even built a staircase. I used a ladder to climb up there when necessary. The coming of fine spring weather put an end to

further work on the house in favour of matters more urgent. And, though there might have been much in our work that an expert would condemn, we were very happy and proud of the transformation brought about.

The summer before I had ploughed a strip of land around the house for seedling trees at the same time I had broken land for our vegetable garden. We had ordered three hundred young seedlings (maple, Russian poplar, ash, and caragana), from the nursery at Indian Head. From Eaton's we had ordered enough page wire to put around the rectangle containing house, vegetable garden, and strip for seedlings. I thought that with a strand or two of barbed wire along the top we should be able to keep out not only the chickens but the farm animals as well. I also got two small garden gates made of heavy wire, as my wife greatly desired them—one for the front of the yard opening on the highway, and the other for the back door. Fence was put up as early as possible. Trees arrived on time and we put them in as we found time. And now I was out "backsetting" the two hundred acres that had been in flax the year before. I had a new neighbour on a new piece of land. As he was a bachelor and his place was near us, he took his meals and slept in the house. He was very nice to have around the place, but what he did not know about farming would fill a book. Ed was a Lethbridge barber, but felt his time would be well spent if he farmed for the summer. The land was available, he had a good engine and outfit at his command, and he felt that, good as the barber business was, growing wheat was even better. Though none of us knew it yet, he had picked a poor year, and one proved enough. The next year he cheerfully went back to his barber shop. When he found himself in difficulties he often called me away from my work to help him, but never expected me to work for him without paying.

One night in February or early March my wife and I attended a dance in the Twelve Mile Coulee school, four miles from home. During the evening she became acquainted with Henry Glick, the chairman of the school board there. He told her the school had been closed since the beginning of the year as they had not been able to secure a teacher, and told her they

would open the school any time if she would care to take the job. She would be paid at the rate of eight hundred and forty dollars a year. She did not give him any answer at the time, though she was tempted to take the job for several reasons. The money would come in handy, she liked teaching, and she would be close enough to drive back and forth. But there was one obstacle that seemed unsurmountable. Under no circumstances would she leave the baby (about two years old), alone during the long hours of the day, while my day's work lay outdoors. Then a strange thing happened. A day or two later a pleasant young girl about eighteen called at the house. She asked Eva if she could give her a job at housework. Accustomed to doing her own work she quickly answered "No." Then she remembered the job of teacher that was waiting, and she asked the girl, Ora Marler, for more particulars. It seemed she had been working several months for some neighbours, the Ludvickson's, and her job had now run out. She was asking fifteen dollars a month if I remember rightly. She looked like a pleasant, capable, and dependable girl with whom one could trust a two-year-old child, and my wife hired her. We never had a better girl; careful, economical, and trustworthy in every way. And Archie took to her from the very first. During the time she was with us there never was the slightest friction on her account.

My wife drove back and forth every morning and evening with horse and buggy. Usually she drove Lady who covered the distance in good time without any urging—once in a while Scotty or Martha. There was a tidy little stable back of the school where the horses were put up and fed during the day, as many of the pupils came either by horse and buggy or saddle-pony.

It was not a large school, from twelve to fifteen pupils, all from farm homes. Most of the children belonged to the Benson, Davy, Talbot, Davidson, Hanson, Ludvickson, and Gwillim families. Without exception they were pleasant, courteous, obedient, and anxious to get on with their studies. Never was a school with less need for punishment. Two girls from one home supplied a bit of the unusual when they rode back and forth, bare-headed and bare-legged, a distance of several miles

on a shaggy little horse guided and controlled by a single neck-rope. Their attendance proved very irregular.

I got home one evening to find the women quite terrified and, with the baby, making their way to the large barn where I had just put up my teams. It was late in April after a glorious day with scarcely a breath of wind. The farmers were all busy on the land, and to the north of us had been burning off weeds, stubble, and old straw-butts. Suddenly the setting sun and all the northern horizon was blotted out by a terrifying, swirling, swift-rising cloud, as black as ink. My wife was sure it was a cyclone, and, thinking the big barn might be safer than the house, she called Ora, took Archie by the hand, and set out for its shelter. Coming in I met them (practically scared to death), and brought them back to the house. To me it was not so terrifying as I knew it was largely smoke that made everything so black. And it was black—pitch black when we got into the house. Soon the storm hit us, but there was no great shock or jarring. The wind was not so heavy; it was the black ash and blackened soil that made it look so fearsome. At that, my wife and Ora were not the only ones badly scared by that cloud. Several people in the district who had come from places in the States where the cyclones struck, took refuge in the basements of their homes when they saw it.

I had hired a lad about fifteen to help me that spring. He hauled water and did the chores while I did the land work, and gave Ed a hand when he needed it. One evening we were quite surprised to see my wife walk into the house late in the evening, without horse or buggy. Someway or other Lady had got loose from the stable during the day and gone over into Jack Currie's big pasture adjoining the school. It was a very large pasture with herds of Aberdeen Angus and Herefords, as well as several bulls, feeding there. For this reason, after giving much thought as to whether she could safely go into the pasture to catch Lady, she decided not to risk it but to walk home. It had happened she found herself busy after her pupils were dismissed and they had all gone home before she missed the mare. I rode down and brought the outfit home after supper. During May of that year a general registration of all citizens of the district had been ordered by the Federal government,

with the school teacher being put in charge of the registration proceedings which were held on a Saturday. Eva was assisted in this work by Mrs. Ole Benson and some other ladies, the school being used as a registration centre.

My wife had arranged with Ora that she should have Saturday afternoons off if she wished, and all Sunday. This suited Ora well as her fiancé was an engineer at the Crystal Dairy in Lethbridge, and his spare time was on the week-ends. Saturday mornings Eva worked in the vegetable garden, but found it immensely discouraging when a dust storm blew everything out of the ground before it was properly up. It was particularly bad that we had a quarter of deep finely-cultivated summer-fallow just west of us across the road. And when our tiny seedlings did come up they would soon be hidden from sight by a deep blanket of fine soil. The blowing soil even banked up on the young seedling trees we had set out for a grove, pretty well smothering them well up their tender stems. There were days when the sun was so darkened we could not tell whether the sky were cloudy or clear; when there was a momentary lull in the wind we would be amazed to see a cloudless sky. Archie would sometimes stand very thoughtfully at the west windows, and then go and get a dust-pan and wing to sweep up the soil as he had seen his mother do so often. It was a common sight to see heavy ridges of dust and sand that had come in around the window frames. During the dry spring of 1918 we re-planted the garden twice, but the yield did not cover the price of the seed, though I watered regularly with water-tank and hose.

My grain crop was nil, as were all not put in early on good summerfallow. However I was fortunate in getting work with my teams to help harvest on the few good yields. I managed to cut a few short scattered heads on my own land for pigs and chickens. Many did not even get that, having nothing available to cut down such short stems.

This was the year that gave George Pearson a good second start in his campaign for irrigation, and he may well be called the "Father of Irrigation" as it concerned the large area now known as the Lethbridge Northern. In season and out of season he drove up and down the land with buggy and work-

horse, often turning the chill breezes with folded newspaper inside the front of his coat, and soon there was a rising tide of demand for irrigation among the farmers. With the end of the war in sight more attention was turned towards the plight of the prairie farmers, and survey parties were sent out in various parts of the district.

Two tragic incidents in August touched our household closely. One was the death of Eva's brother Edward (not yet twenty), who was killed in action at Amiens. The other was one of the earliest of car accidents in our province when a friend from P.E.I., Rev. H. S. Bagnall travelling for the Temperance forces of Alberta, was killed on a sandy road near Taber when his car overturned.

With a hired man or boy hauling water for me all the time I decided to try for water on my own place in order to save that expense. I knew the immediate neighbours had had very poor luck in drilling or boring for water, but thought I would try it out anyway. First of all I got Tom Davis of Nobleford, who was known as a "water witch," to call and "witch" a well-site for me. He walked all around my buildings and picked out a certain spot outside my garden fence, assuring me that I would strike water there within forty-five feet. That sounded real good! I hired a young fellow, Allan Marler, to help me, and we went down about forty feet, digging out a few pieces of free coal as we went. Then I decided to drill in order to find out how deep the water was. We drilled to ninety feet, but no moisture. Seeing the water witch had predicted two good veins of water at a much shallower depth, I did not go farther but filled in the hole. Right after this a cousin of the man from whom I had bought my farm wrote asking me if I would consider leasing for the next year an unbroken half-section he owned one mile north. I broke about forty acres, but as the weather continued dry I did not consider it a satisfactory job, so turned the lease over to a neighbour with an engine and big outfit. Later I was very glad I had done so.

It must have been some time in the autumn when an old ferryman, to whom I had talked on the subject of digging a well, told me of a well-boring machine in Retlaw that I might get. Shortly after this an old fellow with a petrified

fish advised me to try for water on the hill above my garden. He told me his experience had often shown that water could be reached at a shallower depth on the top of a hill. I saw the owner of the machine in Retlaw and he told me I could have it if I would put down a well for him on his own place first. This I did, with Allan again helping me. We came back across the river and before I started on my own well, Fred Ludvickson asked me to put down a well for him. With George Marler as my assistant we put down a dandy well, about seventy feet deep, with a wonderful supply of free-flowing water for which there was an immense demand in the next few years. Other neighbours began to think of trying for water too, and we started on Henry Reber's place. We went down one hundred and forty feet. No water, and nothing but blue clay. By this time the old machine was worn out, and I had to quit. But luckily Ben Talbot had been thinking of having one put down, and he offered to buy a new rig if I would come and help him dig his well. Then he would come and help me dig mine.

That is just what we did, and I was fortunate in getting a good supply of good water at a depth of something over fifty feet. This well was a wonderful convenience to us, and sufficient in quantity, though not such a heavy flow as some wells we dug. The next time I saw the old fellow with the petrified fish I gave him five dollars for his suggestion.

After that we found ourselves in demand for custom work. We put down several holes on the Henry Oliver farm but could get nothing but quicksand. That is how the well-drillers had previously found it on the Reck place. Then George Pearson who was living on the place immediately south of us, which had recently been leased by his son-in-law, Phil Wonski, asked us to drill a well there. George wanted water for his stock and the place he chose was quite low. We were not too hopeful as we went down about eighty-eight feet without any sign of water. We stopped for a "breather" and suddenly the water began to rush in. We went a little deeper while George sent Phil with a team to Nobleford to get the "cribbing." Before he got back the water had risen to eighty-four feet in the hole, and it took all the extra help we could muster to get the "crib-

bing " down in place and fasten it there. Then the water overflowed the top of the well and began to spread over the ground. It made a good-sized lake that for years was a centre of interest. Lots of people were interested in seeing George Pearson's "flowing well" as it was called. And many hundreds of cattle and horses were watered there.

After the Picture Butte sugar factory began operations in 1935, a large artificial lake was made for their use on a natural depression to the north of the town. And, when the water flowed into this new lake from the Keho reservoir, George's flowing well became a thing of the past, being covered and lost in the overrun of waters.

While my wife had been expecting to teach until Christmas, and Ora was planning to stay until that time, when she expected to be married, a most startling development in the history of the whole country changed all plans overnight. It was the terrible plague or pestilence known as the Spanish Flu that struck as suddenly and terribly as the Black Death. First an odd case here and there. Sudden deaths almost overnight among the young and healthy adults! No rhyme or reason to the way this plague struck. And the trustees of Twelve Mile Coulee school closed the school for the rest of the term.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

DEATH STALKS THE LAND

I DO not think it would serve any useful purpose to recount too many of the grim events of those tragic days when death struck down the young and vigorous on every side, without warning. The sudden burning fever and pneumonia that appeared overnight—from where no one knew! Mark Sorgard of Iron Springs, a husky young fellow around twenty, was the first case we heard of. He seemed to make a quick recovery but a sudden relapse took him in a few hours. And so it went on! I remember the case of Floyd Meyers, then the only son of Bill Meyers of Chin. He was a remarkably large healthy boy about eighteen. He was his father's right-hand man, and a great favourite with his grandmother who had come from the States to visit them. He had a great dread of the flu, and escaped it for quite a while. Finally, when he was stricken, he was put in hospital. Because of the overflow of patients tents were being used. Floyd seemed to be making a good recovery but a high wind blew down the tent over the patients one night, and he suffered a fatal relapse. But no need to speak of further cases we knew, except to say that mothers of young children and expectant mothers were very often the victims, as in the case of two of the McCaugherty girls whom I had known since childhood. No one who lived through those grim days can ever forget them!

When the Armistice was signed on November 11th to mark the end of those weary years of fighting, it should have been a time of overwhelming and tumultuous joy. It was a time of solemn thanksgiving, but its gladness was clouded over with the tragedies in the country all around us. Strangely enough almost none of the older people or young children were affected by the disease at this time.

While doctors and hospitals were doing their best to handle the ever-increasing flood of patients, people in their homes were using every kind of recommended antiseptic to avoid the plague. Eucalyptus oil and formaldehyde were in much favour; the former for inhaling and the latter for sprinkling around the room.

After freeze-up I got a job mining coal at Diamond City. This had at one time been a very important shaft-mine, had been closed down for some years, and was now re-opened. Several of my neighbours, whose crops had been dried out, had taken work there. I used to go back and forth week-ends with Fred Dickout who passed right by my door. He drove a car. Ed Landry, who had been a coal miner in the East, as well as Ed Larter and Bobbins Brady, lived in the same block of houses there, and it was a fearsome time we had, while many a husky miner who went into the pit in the morning, was brought up before night either dying or dead. There were funerals every day. The small hospital was overcrowded and tents were set up. The tents served but poorly in a season of "black blizzards," for they often blew down exposing the patients to the weather. There was almost no snowfall during this time. The men in our block were all fortunate in escaping the disease, though one nearly poisoned himself by using too much formaldehyde in his room. And the doctor blamed many of the deaths at that time to patients hiding their medicine under their pillows instead of taking it; also to eating too heartily of meat and other strong foods while they were still weak from a bad attack. To go back to my neighbour who suffered from poisoning, I might say he had been asked to help in the moving of some bodies of flu victims, and had done so before he realised what he had been carrying. At once he went to his room and sprinkled the disinfectant around liberally before he went to bed. He woke very sick the next morning with severe headache and sore throat. "Tell the doctor to come—I have the flu!" The doctor took one look at him and said, "You haven't got flu! You're just poisoned with formaldehyde." Hearing that, the man was soon on the road to recovery.

In the meantime Ora and Hyrum had been married, and my wife was busy looking after things at home, both inside and

out. She did a lot of sewing in those days. I had got her an Eaton sewing-machine when we were first married, and she made good use of it through the years, making all Archie's clothing and most of her own. It was a "foot-tread" model, and with just one overhaul is in such good shape that she is still using it. The price I paid for it new—not quite twenty dollars, plus carriage—would be beyond belief today. Another task that took a lot of work and time that winter was painting and varnishing all the inside woodwork. She used an oak varnish stain on the doors, the door frames, around the windows, the wide base-board, and the moulding. With everything except the doors being home-planed she had to use three coats to make it look like anything. Shiplap floors needed a lot of attention too, putting on floor paint and enamel quite frequently. When coal orders fell off and the mine closed I was able to help her in this work. Our young son was very easily amused. He had a few simple toys, but he liked better to be helping us in whatever we were doing. Or he might turn over a couple of chairs on the floor, pick up the stove-shaker, and pretend to crank up the car. Lest the reader might wonder why we were doing this work in winter, I may say that fine weather is usually a busy time on a farm. And so 1918 passed into history, leaving us all in good health. The worst of the flu epidemic seemed to have passed by March. One morning I called at Phil Wonski's for butter, as our milk supply was low for the time being. Phil was young and strong, but had suddenly come down very sick. His wife didn't know what the trouble was. I had been home only a few hours when I came down with an unbearable headache and a raging fever that left me shivering out of control. Eva plied me with hot liquids and put a mountain of blankets over me. Through the night till nearly 4 a.m. she kept me drinking hot broths and the like in order that I might come out in a sweat. Then, feeling sudden illness and chill herself, she covered herself with quilts, took a hot drink, and lay down (as she intended) for a few minutes. But she dropped into a deep sleep, and when I got a bad nose-bleed I was not able to arouse her. By the time she was awake my terrific nose-bleed had almost stopped, and she was able to get up and give me some attention. In the meantime I had broken out into a sweat that left me

sopping wet, and so weak I could not lift my head. But I was more than thankful the fever had broken.

Neither one of us was fit to go outside for a few days and we had no telephone. We both developed a bad hacking cough, and Archie became so drowsy and sleepy that he would hardly eat. He did not seem very sick so his mother wrapped him in a warm quilt and let him sit in his high chair. He was like that for the best part of a week—seemed to be half-asleep, and no appetite. My mother, who was just over a bad cold herself, came in to find us in poor shape, and as it was a lovely mild afternoon she walked to Ludvicksons (more than a mile) to get someone to do the outside chores for us. Both Olivers and Ludvicksons helped us out wonderfully for coal and water, as well as looking after the stock, at a time I could not go outside. My wife, who was then expecting our second child, was also quite weak though she managed to keep up and look after the house in a fashion. It was several days before I was strong enough to sit up, and when I went outdoors I put a woollen scarf across my mouth and nose.

When I was able to be about again I found that Phil had fared much worse than I, having suffered from pneumonia and then a relapse, though he finally recovered in hospital. Many flu patients preferred to stay at home and indoors till better, which was just as well on account of crowded hospitals, though it made more work for the doctors, who were unselfish enough to drive around day and night.

My crop prospects that spring did not look very bright. With lack of money and time the fall before, I had done no fall ploughing, and I had no summer fallow. Spring ploughing was out of the question now with April more than half over. I was still not doing much of anything when Fred Ludvickson asked me to go along to Lethbridge early in May. Although we were driving in the car I was amazed to find how weary and useless I was by the time we reached home. And in talking with Henry Oliver, he told me he thought I would be money ahead by working for him as soon as I was able, and not putting in any crop to speak of. Of course I got my potatoes and vegetables in the ground before it was too late, though as far as rainfall was concerned the spring was even drier than in 1918.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

MAKING OUT SOMEHOW

THE HARDY annuals we had put in small flower-beds beside the house were smothered with wind, dust, and sand in 1919. The three hundred young trees from which we had hoped so much in the way of shelter were beaten down by the summer fallow soil from across the road. Archie Davy, a neighbour, told us they would soon be out of sight unless we "put stilts under them."

One fine afternoon in late July we all drove down to the coulee to pick ripe saskatoons. We left the runabout on top of the hill while we took down our pails and some lunch. We planned on setting it out on a grassy plot in the bottom of the coulee, and later in the evening continue picking. As we climbed around from bush to bush in search of the berries, we never noticed a sudden thunderstorm until the thunder broke above us. The rain began pelting down, and I spread the canvas I had carried down over the branches of a tree where I thought we might shelter. It seemed like a good time to have our lunch, but before long a heavy stream of water, gathering together from nearby slopes and draws, started to carry our lunch and boxes away. We got pretty wet before we reached higher ground but no one suffered any bad effects from the unexpected deluge.

A few farms had planted good stands of alfalfa during the two wet years. Henry Oliver had a good acreage and I spent considerable time that summer in helping him put it up. I also ploughed up all my broken land, something over two hundred acres, in order that it would be in good shape to put in the 1920 crop. Now all through the country the demand for irrigation was growing and meetings were being held in the various small centres of the district. Men who were prominent in the discussions for and against irrigation were T. W. Crofts, Tom

Wyman, Tom Wright, Ben Talbot, Jules Reck, Mr. Rutherford, and many others who had a large interest in farming conditions.

According to her doctor's diagnosis my wife could expect her baby about August 25th. She made arrangements to go to the small Diamond City hospital where there was one nurse during the summer months. Her vacation came in early August. Eva's sister from Hoosier, Saskatchewan, offered to come down and keep house while Eva was away, arriving on August 21st. On account of so much dust and sand all the time, it seemed like a good idea to do some extra house cleaning before going to the hospital. She put in one good day working and was quite satisfied with her progress when I found her resting that evening when I got home from Oliver's. She and Archie were lying comfortably on the warm grass, enjoying the evening air. At six o'clock the next morning she woke me to say we would have to go to the hospital. We started in our little runabout and on the stroke of 8 a.m. we were standing on the sunny steps of the hospital. Dr. Inkrote, greatly surprised, met us. "Those papooses!" he said. "You never know when they'll decide to arrive. My nurse will not be back from her vacation till the 23rd."

He told me to take my wife back home, and go after Mrs. Powell or someone like that. He would be over in a couple of hours and stay till the baby was born. We went back home and I got Mrs. Ludvickson to stay with my wife. True to his word, the doctor arrived in an hour or so, turning his car on two wheels as he came round the corner. (He drove very fast for those days). Mrs. Ludvickson got dinner for the rest of us while Eva kept herself busy changing the bedroom furniture around in view of a home confinement. Our little girl was born about 3 p.m. on my thirty-first birthday. On the 21st my sister-in-law arrived as expected and much surprised to hear the baby was already here. Mrs. Powell came later, for a few days, to help with the new-born child, and when unexpected company from the east came for a few days we had a really crowded house.

With rain in the late summer the crop of Russian thistles was something to take into consideration. When young and green it is rich in oils, and more than one farmer had found it made good feed for cattle and horses. During late August

and early September I cut all the heavy, tender, green Russian thistles on my farm with mower and team. After raking them up I stacked them while still moist, using layers of coarse salt. These stacks proved a wonderful substitute for hay and straw. The stock ate it with much apparent relish, particularly the milk cows. Their milk had an excellent flavour and more cream than usual, but its colour was slightly darker.

Winter weather set in very early with frost and snow during the first week of October. I started digging my potatoes, which were better than most around, without even waiting for the ground to dry up. It was well I did, for inside another week a second wet snowfall brought several inches of snow with the soil beneath freezing as well. I kept right on digging—I used a fork and my wife picked up the tubers behind me, till we finally had them all in the cellar. The snow remained on the ground until Christmas time, all the time getting a little deeper, till the farmers began to feed from their straw-stacks. I was very happy to be feeding from my stacks of Russian thistles, as besides my cows and calves I had quite a number of horses inside the fences of my half-section. By this time the price of hay was getting very high, and about the only place it was available was the irrigated country around Coaldale. Good straw-stacks could be bought around Nobleford. Some hay was brought in from the north of the province but it did not seem to agree with the stock, and some of the Iron Springs boys took their stock up north to the hay. Still the hay did not suit them, and many horses died there. In March hay was brought in from Oregon. Prices during the winter went to fifty dollars a ton, then to sixty and seventy before the grass was green in spring.

When the Oliver supply of hay had been exhausted he hauled straw from Nobleford and Barons. With my teams I hauled for him through the depth of winter, and many sub-zero days we plodded beside our horses when they found the snow deep and the going slow. We often started out about 3 a.m. before daylight on a round trip of something like thirty miles. We were thankful to get safely home with our loads around 9 p.m. In other ways the farmers were glad to see the deep snow, hoping for a favourable crop in 1920. The snow was late going and it

left a good moisture supply behind. In our district winter took one last fling on May 20th when a terrific blizzard from the north-west that lasted almost three days piled up drifts as high as eight feet. And the wind was bitter and piercing—so strong that it shook the house. I already had my summer fallow in crop but it was not up. And I was glad still to have feed-stacks in the field to shelter the stock outside. For two days the bluster was so thick I did not dare to go farther than the farm buildings though I was worried about a very pretty young mare about due for her first colt. That was my only loss; I found both mare and colt dead beside the stack. But several ranchers who had already turned their stuff on the fresh grass suffered grievous loss both in cattle and horses. The Bulmer horses pastured on an open half-section just north of me. I counted twenty dead horses there. Cows died when they were driven up against barbed wire or caught in fence corners. No permanent damage was reported to the new wheat coming up. In a couple of days the land was dry, and soon the landscape was lovely with the tender green of the far-extending fields of wheat. My crop flourished, there was no hail, and I threshed enough to sell in car lots for a better price. There was one fly in the ointment during the fall of 1920. The good price of wheat was beginning to drop, and before I got a car spotted through the U.G.G. the price had declined several cents. However, when I got my returns I had the problem of making my cheque, big though it was, cover my land payments, back interest, lumber and machinery bills, etc. (for I had been without any crop returns for the past two years) without having as much as five dollars left over for ourselves. But I was glad to have been able to give all my creditors enough to satisfy them for that year. For myself I must go out to work at whatever offered itself. I did as much threshing work with my teams as possible among my neighbours. During the summer I had put in about thirty acres of fall rye which was considered a good investment at that time in case of drought. Plans for irrigation were coming nearer with surveys of the proposed ditches being staked out everywhere. One of the engineers in charge of the survey, and a veteran, was Andy Hilliard, with whom I finally became very well acquainted. He was an enthusiastic gardener, and later was

water-master for our immediate district. He was a good man for the job and our two families became good friends. Later he was transferred to Monarch.

I must not forget to mention the high grade dirt road that was put in that year from Nobleford to the Cameron and went by our door. There was a lot of traffic going by us then. The Noble teams strung out two by two (up to twelve head) hauling wheat with their trailer wagons; steam tractor trains with eight or ten wagons hauling lumber for the Cameron camps, and I believe the first combine in this part of the south was used on the Cameron crops at that time. It drew hundreds of visitors from all around. Many times employees of the Noble farms would stop to get water for their radiators, or something of the kind, as we lived about halfway along that solitary road. Their pick-up man often called when going back and forth and my wife got into the habit of sending a list of groceries by him to the Noble Foundation. On his return trip he would drop off the groceries. We did this about once a week, and the manager of the store, Mr. Rubie, was a very good man to deal with.

When I was threshing on the N. B. Peat crop I met a coal miner from Wayne who was working in the harvest during the slack season. He told me he had been making top wages in Drumheller, and there was a great demand for men. I decided to go up there and work for the winter, taking the wife and children along if I could find proper housing. I went ahead to look over the conditions and found they were quite different from what I had known at Diamond City. It was about the time of the first big Drumheller strike (from which the coal-fields there never recovered altogether) and there were hundreds of men walking the streets. Two men—strangers perhaps—were allotted a room. I did not consider this would be satisfactory for me, so came home. After I came back I got a job pick-mining in the Malloy mine. Some of the equipment was in very poor shape, and inside a week or so I got into a tangle with the overman, Andy Malloy, over the loading of mine cars. I quit before he should fire me; especially as the cars were in such poor repair that I found it very hard to carry out his instructions. But the demand for coal from the farmers was much greater

than the mine could supply. They were coming from thirty to forty miles away (some even farther) with their teams and wagons in order to get a season's supply before winter set in. They could have obtained their coal at the larger shaft mines, but were anxious to save by buying at a cheaper price a somewhat softer quality, though it burned well and gave out good heat. With this in mind they travelled long distances, often with four, six or eight-horse teams, and quite often with food for themselves or feed for their horses if they should stay overnight. At this time Tom Wright, a man of foresight and good financial judgment, called my attention to a mine right across the coulee from Malloys, which was then idle. It had been opened in 1917 by a Mr. Jones, who himself now had a better-paying job in one of the big mines. Tom thought that if I spent a little time and money on repairing this mine, I could do very well in helping supply the local demand for coal, and offered to back my note for five hundred dollars. I soon arranged with Mr. Jones to lease his mine, and drove back and forth from home each day while I worked on repairs to entries and tracks, and cleaning up the dirt that had fallen around the coal face. I hired an old farmer who had formerly been a miner as overman, also some neighbour boys who had experience in pick-mining, and soon we were able to supply coal to customers. For customers who had to wait overnight during the cold fall weather I had barn and corral on the farm where they could put up their teams, also buildings where they could sleep. Many a time they spread their blankets on the kitchen and living-room floors, whereas at the mines there were no places to sleep. The miners who were working there needed all the space available in the small shacks. There were nights when I had outfits staying over from such places as Carmangay, Barons, Granum, Keho, White Lake, Claresholm, Travers, and Sundial. Those nights I stayed to work with the night shift, and might not get home for two or three days at a time. Driving back and forth on the open prairie that time of year in an open buggy was not always pleasant. There were some pretty cold mornings, and some sudden thick storms where I had to trust to my horse's knowledge. The trail I followed led south past the old shack on N. B. Peat's farm, and there was only one more building to be

seen until I passed the big, bald, lone hill known as Picture Butte. On the site of the present prosperous village there was not one single building, nor any sign of human life.

Trade at the mine always slackened towards the spring, but I kept on enough crew to help me enlarge and prepare for the fall trade, as well as to fill any small orders during spring and summer. The price of lump coal was five dollars a ton, which gave me enough to pay my miners and keep eating. On the farm front I had hired an industrious young fellow to look after putting in my crop and harvesting my rye. The spring was dry and the rye did not fill too well. The wheat was very slow in its growth. A lot of farmers did not feel quite so discouraged over this dry season as a start had been made in digging the irrigation ditches, and extra work was also available to those who wanted to take a sub-contract for putting in a couple of miles or so of ditch. But these sub-contracts usually proved no snap, and more than one of the small contractors went broke as they had little money or equipment to begin with. Some were "dried-out farmers" from a distance, working on a shoe-string. With a small tent or two they got permission to camp on a farmer's land, probably buying butter, meat, milk, and eggs from him. The hay credit extended called for them to haul mostly from Barons, and the same red tape meant an exorbitant price per ton. Their few teams with scrapers and fresnos found the work exceedingly hard, and often long-drawn-out, in order to meet specifications. The work was terribly hard on the horses used, and though I had a fine young team for hire or sale I could not find it in my heart to allow them to be crippled at this work. Rather I took a somewhat lower price for them and sold them to my neighbour, who was always considerate of his horses. They were a very nice and pretty young team that I had raised from colts, and almost matched except for colour. I called them Dixie and Daisy.

I did not put too much time in preparing my land for crop during that summer of 1921, knowing we would not have the water for at least two years. But I bent all my energies to getting ready for the fall trade at the mine. I had studied and got my papers as overman. In those days coal operators with experience but not much formal education in mining could get a permit

to run a small coal mine for one year. This permit or overman's certificate called for a certain number of months' mining experience, and was given by the Provincial Government. Miners who worked at the face of the coal now were required to pass an efficiency test, and those who had no experience had to work as helpers with a qualified miner. Before this men had been mining coal without such restrictions. As miners we had to be able to do several things besides using a pick. We had to do our own timbering, track-laying, and build our own switches. We had to take up bottom to make height for the coal cars. In order to mine by hand with a pick a miner had to lie down (or sit down in the peculiar way a miner does) for the seams were only from thirty-six to forty-two inches in thickness. In these small mines we could not "shoot on the solid"; that is, shoot the coal directly off the face. It was necessary to undercut or shear first, and some of the older pick miners were remarkably skilful at this. They were very fussy too about the sharpening and dressing of their particular picks. One I call to memory who took great pride in his skill was Jack Hamilton, who worked for some years at the Malloy mine and for me. In the end he went up to work in a mine near Carmangay, and riding a mine-car up the slope one evening after work (strictly against the rules) was killed outright. He was an A.1. pick-miner.

The tipple at the Jones mine was at the top of a long slope. We used cars that held about nine hundred pounds of coal, and the miners were paid seventy-five cents a car, with extra for entry work. When iron rails were scarce we often used steel-strapped wooden tracks, or even plain wooden tracks. We hoisted the cars up the slope by means of a horse going round and round on a gin. Some of the necessary "dead" work we did during the slack summer season was driving butt entries, opening up new room-necks, and completing another air shaft. When fall came we began to see the results of the summer's work. Sales increased and a successful season seemed to be shaping up. But at this point the man from whom I had leased the mine proved a real Shylock. I had been put to so much expense on dead work that I was not able to meet the agreed payment on the lease at a certain specified date. So he came out early one morning with a mining crew and told me he was

going to take over operations himself. I told him I would not even allow him inside the mine until he had a legal right to enter—until he could get possession legally. I even refused to let him come inside the mine shack where he was planning on cooking breakfast for himself and his men. One of my miners came out ready to go down to work, and he told him not to do so. My man was quite angered and told him if he was looking for a fight he would be right glad to oblige him. After a while, seeing they were making no progress in their plans, he and his men went away. In spite of his objections I continued through the Christmas trade, but in the meantime I discovered a very bad dirt fault across the workings, and decided I would turn the lease back to him without further payment after the New Year.

This man had formerly held another sixty acres to the south but had let it lapse. I looked over the location and found some promising outcroppings farther down the coulee, and decided I would apply for that lease as it was being advertised for January, 1922. As I had my own tools and necessary equipment, as well as a small mine shack of my own, I would only have to move them a short distance around the head of a short coulee when I should have acquired the new property and decided on a good location for the buildings. I had already discovered what seemed like a good place for a road up the hill from the level of the coal seam. Of course, I would need to do a lot of work with my teams, plough, and scraper, in widening and grading the road.

We had a bad blizzard out of the north-east the day before Christmas that year. The Noble pick-up, carrying Christmas supplies and Christmas presents for the family of the manager at the Cameron, quit on the highway just west of our farm with a badly frozen radiator. The driver walked to the house for help, and I took my team to pull his light truck into the yard. We brought all the perishables into the house, and the driver had to stay with us over Christmas Eve as the storm was getting worse, and there was no telephone line we could use. Searchers from the Cameron found the delayed outfit the next afternoon and took the supplies to the waiting family. The truck was out of commission with a cracked block for a time.

As the time for filing on the sixty-acre lease drew near I realised I was going to have considerable competition from other mining men who were interested in getting it. How to outwit my competitors was now the important thing. The filing was early on a Monday morning, and for me to be away from home over Sunday or to be seen around Lethbridge might be a dead give-away. At this point my wife suggested that she should go in and do the filing, as her absence from home would not likely be noticed by the persons interested. Driving in an open car at thirty below over deep snowy roads was no pleasure trip for her, but we both thought it was the best thing to do. So, on Saturday afternoon Fred Ludvickson took her to Lethbridge in his Ford runabout, with no worse trouble than having his radiator freeze up for a short while on the top of a windy hill. My wife wore a long muskrat coat which, along with the foot-warmer, helped to keep her from freezing too. She stayed with friends about four blocks from the Post Office, the Lands Department being upstairs. In spite of a thirty-degree below temperature she was up early, and with a fur muff against her face, walked to the Post Office where she arrived as the clock struck 5 a.m. Two charwomen were busy at their tasks. She thought they looked rather surprised as she walked past and went upstairs. Naturally there was no one else there at that hour of the morning. She found an empty apple-box in the hallway and carried it over in front of the wicket where she sat down to wait. At 5.15 a.m. a man in outdoor clothes and heavy boots clumped up the stairs, took one look at her, took a couple of turns along the hall, and went down again. One or two more came as far as the head of the stairs during the next four hours before the wicket opened at 9.15 a.m. She had remained without moving away during that time, and so obtained the lease. This was a cash transaction and for the payment I had borrowed on my life insurance.

Jack Adair, whom I had known since early round-up days, had worked for me off and on during the years between, as well as visiting me from time to time. He had been working for me that fall and was now staying at the house for the winter. As soon as the weather was mild enough we began working on the rusty outcroppings at the spot where I had decided to push

entry. But for a time the coal was too slacked by exposure to the weather to give out any heat in burning. We soon got into good bright black coal that we could burn in the house, but of course could not sell any till we had built a road and chutes. There was a great deal of labour in building the chutes, which were made of old planks and square timbers. I had bought this lumber very cheap from a rancher who had bought the old bridge structures on the St. Mary's for almost nothing. We made the screens of two by fours at first, but found them very poor for the purpose, lumps of coal getting wedged in them all the time. A retired railway engineer who was using discarded boiler flues for fence posts suggested we try them for screens. They served much better. Later on we found discarded angle-irons from old bridges were best of all for screens. For timber I used at first a supply I had bought to use in the other mine, and after that I bought poplar and other wood poles growing on the bottom lands. Such timber was cheap, being of little use for firewood or lumber. I did not find them too good for mine timbers either, but they served the purpose until I could afford something better.

Many a day we spent making a road up the hill which, when finished, was still steep enough that I needed to put on a snatch team when a single team could not handle a load. We worked with plough and teams, with grubbing hoe, axe, and shovel as we gouged out the side of a hill to make a road wide and level enough for wagons. Later we borrowed a Martin ditcher to use on it until we thought it safe enough to travel. There had been one deep gully across the roadway, and before filling in the earth we had bridged it with heavy poplar and cherry tree trunks that were growing over the gorge.

During these spring months the matter of ready cash was very urgent. We hardly dared to spend a cent on postage stamps if it could be avoided. Between the time of taking out the new lease and getting ready to sell coal I had no report on operations to send the Government. So I economised on postage stamps by not posting any monthly returns, for which I was promptly summoned and had the expense of a trip to Lethbridge. As I had not been selling I was not given a fine, but advised to send them regularly whether stamped or not. Food problems we still

eked out by having our own meat, butter, and chickens. For drinking water we had discovered a few nice springs in the coulee bottom near the road, and for stock and washing we put in a dam across a hollow on the first coulee bottom. This reservoir caught a good supply of water from the melting snow-banks on the coulee sides.

As soon as I had secured the new lease it was up to me to make some decision about the farm, as I could not satisfactorily carry on with both. With irrigation still a year or so in the future I thought it better to turn the farm back to Mr. Bowman. So, although he was not anxious for me to do so, I sent him a "quit claim" on the property, thinking he might be able to make a better deal in view of the certainty of irrigation for the district. I decided to move to the new mine site all my buildings not wedded to the land. The house was among these, as I had built it on square timbers, and I thought we might move it quite easily on skids before the snow had all disappeared. I had already taken one small shack down to the mine where Jack and I ate and lived while working there.

In the mild days of late April we got the skids in place under the timbers and waited for a skiff of fresh snow for the actual moving. Lucky that was just what we got the next morning! I had already hired Jules Reck with one team of big work horses and Oliver's with two big teams to help me move to my new location on Section 27, 10, 21—a distance of about four miles. Early in the morning we got the teams all hitched to the south side of the house and were ready to start. Before this Eva had wrapped all the dishes and breakables inside quilts and blankets and put them on top of two wide beds. The cabinets and cupboards were stuffed and packed tight with paper and clean towels. The fire in the kitchen range was going and the dinner was cooking on the stove as we travelled. Archie, five, and Lois, two, were sitting at the low kitchen windows and looking out at the teams. They took great pleasure in watching everything that went on. The teams did not pull together at first and made one or two unsuccessful starts. When they finally got started together they swept along in fine style. Straight south across the prairie they went for a mile or so. Then, sweeping in a half-circle to avoid a wide, low slough-bottom at the head of

Picture Butte Coulee, they swung again towards the east in the direction of our destination. At this point the north-west corner of the house caught a corner-post of Henry Reber's fence, shearing it off completely. The jar caused an empty bread pan to slide off the top of the range oven to the floor but no damage was done. It was only a short time till we arrived at the spot I had decided on for the site of the house. It was fairly high ground, overlooking the location of the mine mouth; a bare wind-swept spot with no vegetation but brown prairie grass. And there, not more than fifty feet from the coulee edge, the teams brought the house to rest. It had to remain on skids until we had a chance to level the ground to meet the requirements of the big timbers on which the house was built.

We all found it very pleasant after our morning trip to be able to come into the house and sit down to a good hot dinner of meat, potatoes, and vegetables. Yes, it was a pleasant thought to know that the house and all its comforts was now close to where we were working, and no more long trips back and forth night and morning. A bare and lonely spot it was, but the years ahead saw many changes.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

MY YEARS AT THE WARREN MINE

BUT EVEN then there was a background for beauty in the spot I had chosen for my home. Looking southward down the wide, deep coulee towards the river—before this the name had been changed from the Belly to the Old Man River—the eye could follow its sweeping curves and rest on a lovely tree-clad island that stood in the midst of the current. In summer the island was a spot of tender green contrasting with the grey-green of the prairie above, and had it been near a city would have been an ideal spot for a park. Steep colourful cutbanks outlined the river's curves, and strangers from a distance or from the city would often stop to exclaim over the exceptional beauty of the view from our back door. Straight across the gorge to the east of us was a multitude of rounded "hogbacks" with so little vegetation that they reminded one of the Bad Lands, while in the numberless draws and hollows of the sloping banks below us and on the green-grassed bottoms were all kinds of berry bushes and hundreds of wild flowers. I began that very first spring to do something about the bareness around our house. I ploughed and put in a potato plot, and I planted out small trees and native shrubs around the house. We expected to be free of dust as there was no cultivated land within a mile or more. Although it was a year before irrigation water came in, we suffered no more from soil-drift in our new location. We enjoyed the clear blue sky of the summer mornings, and many, many miles away on cloudless evenings we could see the gold and rose and crimson of sunset over the white-capped peaks and purple shadows of the mountains to the south-west. In the grassy hollows and draws the green of spring came early, and the first yellow violets. In summer's high noon the wild roses



made a carpet of pink on every side, and on the barest, driest knolls the huge cactus blooms spread out like roses of yellow silk. The perfume of saskatoon and wild cherry carried far on the spring air. Every year we lived there we made more use of the wild berries, saskatoon, gooseberry, choke-cherry, and bulberry—growing so abundantly.

After we had dinner the day of the house-moving Jack and I went back to the farm to bring some of the things we had left behind, as well as our horses and milk cows. For a few days we had to shut these animals in hastily-built enclosures or they would have gone straight back to their familiar ground. It took us about a week to move everything we wanted, and to put up crude shelters for the livestock. There were still many hard heavy snow-banks on the sheltered east side of the coulee, level with the tops of the cutbanks and having the same kind of overhang. We had barely got settled when Lois, not yet three, was watching the men working around the coulee. She walked out

from the door and stepped on one of the overhanging snow-banks. The snow was already getting rotten with the spring sun and it gave way under her feet. Snow and little girl disappeared together down a steep slope of perhaps a hundred feet. Her yells of fright carried clear on the spring air as she rolled over and over in the snow. A patch of wild rose bushes stopped her from tumbling into the water of the dam. Luckily I was right there to plunge after her. Although she was terribly scared she suffered nothing worse than some surface scratches on her skin. She was rather a shy, quiet child who was much more at home with busy workmen than with dressed-up ladies. I remember my wife remarking on that to Mrs. Corcoran, our minister's wife, who made this bright reply: "I expect you'll find her more that way as she gets older!" And the women had a good laugh over that very fitting reply.

Snakes—rattlesnakes—were our big problem over the next few months. We had always been used to seeing the odd rattlesnake show up in summer time anywhere along the river. Now we began to find them—or rather they began to find us—in great numbers once the snow was off the ground. Without knowing it we had placed the house right over one of their dens at a time when they were still holed up for the winter. On the last day of April, which was cool and cloudy but mild, I had turned the milk cows, as usual, to graze in the coulees before we went to work. There was good fresh grass there and it was showing green in the hollows.

About noon his mother sent Archie to see if the cows were still where I put them. We were still keeping an eye on them lest they should take a notion to stray back to the farm. Archie was rather a long time in coming back, and Eva began to be worried lest he had gone down toward the river where I had taken him a few days before. At last he came in, and in answer to her questions said he had not seen the cows or been near the river. After a few minutes' silence he said, "I saw a couple of dead snakes down in the coulee." She told him that could not possibly be, for snakes that had been dead over winter would be only skeletons by spring. When she told him he should not make up stories like that he insisted that he had seen "two dead snakes coiled up in the grass." That remark put an

altogether different complexion on his story, and it was her turn to be startled. She asked him if he could show her the spot where he had seen them. He said he thought so. She woke Lois, who was sleeping (she did not want to leave her alone in the house) and put on their warm coats as it was getting cold and threatening. Then with a long light pole in one hand and holding Lois by the other they all moved very slowly and carefully down the path Archie had taken before. As they neared the place where he remembered seeing them she stopped short to look carefully around. There, not more than a couple of yards from their feet, was a large hole in the grassy earth about as deep and wide as a large water-pail. And it was filled, simply filled, with rattlesnakes of every size, coiled tightly head and tail. She said it was impossible to guess how many there were, but it didn't take her long, after that first look, to back away and bring the children up to the house. And you may be sure they never took a step without looking down. In fact that got to be a habit with all of us from that time on. Jack came home before I did and she showed him the location of the den. He went down with his shotgun and got several right in the den. The next day was warm and sunny, and we spotted two big ones crawling over the patches of melting snow and up the green grassy draws. Whichever way we walked we could meet them moving slowly to the top and so it went for the next few days.

One big rattler got underneath the house before it was properly banked, and it was our cat that told us, as the snake had lost its rattles. The cat kept peering under the house in a very odd way till I got the idea I should look into the matter. As the children played close to the house one day Archie saw a small snake slide down a gopher hole. He sent Lois in to tell her mother while he watched that it did not get away. It happened that Eva had some ladies visiting her when Lois burst into the house very red-faced, shouting at the top of her voice, "Wattle-wattle-wattle!" Of course, we killed as many as we saw that summer and I skinned many of the larger ones, a few of which measured slightly over six feet. By fall I had a string of thirty dried-out skins. We were very careful to bury all the heads on account of the poison fangs. To be fair to the snakes they made no effort to molest us, but rather to escape if

they could possibly get away, and nearly always a warning rattle. We ploughed out a huge one when we were building the mine road and counted nineteen eggs, each one as large as the yolk of a hen's egg, inside the reptile. And we ploughed out one very tiny active one that looked like a small piece of binder twine with a little button on one end.

Came the morning of June 23rd, King George V's birthday, a beautiful clear sunny day. We took an added interest in this king because, oddly enough, Jack Adair looked so very much like him, even to the beard. And it was something that people remarked on all the years I knew Jack.

Well, that morning we got up as usual and looked across the coulee towards the Malloy mine. A strange and almost unbelievable sight met our eyes. There were still the mine buildings and tipples in the background, but the great heavy hill that had projected out into the coulee was gone, split into four slender tall pinnacles of earth that pointed drunkenly skyward. A heavy mass of slidden earth filled the coulee gorge, and the huge cleft above dropped sheer for eighty feet or more. Beyond that yawning cracks extended across the level prairie. Beneath the destruction that happened during the night hours were the workings of the Malloy mine. We wondered what the story had been, and what the loss of life. We soon heard about it. During the slack season there had just been one miner working, pulling pillars. His name was Clifford Brady and he was baching in the miner's shack there. When the mine operator, Andy Malloy, and his hoistman, Jack Keopke, arrived on the scene that morning they were paralysed by the sight. "Poor Clifford! How will we ever be able to dig him out?" they wondered. They stumbled down over the rubble towards the mine mouth, but everything was gone. Hardly knowing what they did, they climbed the hill again, and when they came in sight of the miner's shack they caught sight of Clifford. Andy was sure it was his ghost. But there was a simple explanation, and Clifford, who had just got out of bed, did not even know of the slide. He had slept late because he was working graveyard shift the night before. With the experienced ear and eye of a coal miner he had known the mine was "working" too much to be safe. Timbers were popping and cracking, while

rock and shale fell around him as his pick bit into the main pillar. He decided to call it a day, went up, and to bed where he slept soundly and late into the morning. It was now the turn of the other two to feel foolish although much relieved. While they had been coming up the hill they had been debating on what cross they should put up to his memory if they could not recover his body. But luckily all had ended well.

On Saturday afternoons in early summer we often went down to the mouth of the Little Bow to catch pike which made a very acceptable change in our menu. We usually stayed overnight. That summer I traded coal to Henry Reber for an old laundry wagon he had bought second-hand. It still had "Lethbridge Laundry" painted on the side. It did us fine as a light wagon and covered-in vehicle. Eva and the children slept in it, while we men fished through the late and early hours. Robert Harvie's brother, Jack, was a man who was always joking and clowning, and often went fishing. One night he pretended he was lost as he looked for a path among the big old cottonwoods. Suddenly he shouted to the other fellows, "I'm all right now. I know where I am. I see the Lethbridge Laundry!"

But that is not to say Jack Harvie was the only one who enjoyed clowning by times. Our district dances were still very informal, being held mostly in barns or country schools. I got a lot of fun attending them whenever I could find the time, and I loved to call square dances particularly. One night at Twelve Mile school my wife was not particularly amused. I was swinging and calling a square in noisy, exuberant fashion while my wife was sitting beside a woman from another part of the country whom she had met for the first time. As they carried on a desultory conversation the other lady interrupted herself to exclaim, "Who is that man?" as she pointed at me. I can imagine the look on my wife's face as she answered, "That's my husband!" And she didn't waste much time telling me about it when we got home.

I was fortunate, once we had opened the mine so as to get good coal, to get coal orders from the Noble Farms. It came in very handy, as I was getting my grocery supply from the Noble Foundation all this time, and found them very good to deal with. Although I was not yet under the heavy coal cover

of the upper prairie I was getting a good quality of coal, black, shining, and giving out lots of heat. I had a mine pony to pull the cars out to the chute, and a little stable for him inside. We used open lights—carbide lights—as we had good ventilation and no gas. Early that autumn one of the best men I ever had came to work for me. He was Jack Fleming from Manitoba who had been working in the harvest fields. A man about forty, he said he would rather learn to dig coal than go on relief. I took him on as my own helper, and in no time at all he had mastered the knack of swinging a pick. Because he was strong, tireless and reliable, he spent many a busy season with me. He lived in the house and was so nice to the children we all looked on him almost as one of the family. The fact that he had lived a lonely life was perhaps the reason that money seemed to burn a hole in his pocket and brought on a thirst that was his real enemy. He was a man of rare character and kindness, of whom we see his like too rarely. We grieved much to hear of his death at Fort Macleod last year.

When the rush season came in early autumn my trade was better than I had hoped. Coal was cash and with a number of miners at work the business prospered handsomely for the rest of the year. Outfits were coming from east, west, north for their winter supply of coal. They came from Enchant, Retlaw, Sundial, Turin, Bowville, Barons, Carmangay, Nobleford, Granum, White Lake, and Claresholm, as well as the immediate Picture Butte and Iron Springs district. The Ferguson outfit took orders for many long hauls. I worked continuous shifts, three a day, and my wife, besides cooking for the miners, made up huge quantities of sandwiches for lunch at midnight. Many a day I did not get out of my mining clothes all the way around the clock. Not that I worked that long in the mine, but being needed on hand for one thing or another. There was always the need to be on the lookout in case an extra team was needed for pulling up the hill, or I might have to make arrangements for customers who would have to wait overnight. Many a night the house was well crowded with teamsters who brought their own blankets and slept on the floor.

As things were looking quite prosperous I planned on send-

ing my wife, who was now very tired, and the children back on a visit East to her people. She had not been able to afford that since our marriage. Now the wife of one of the men I had hired wanted to get a job as housekeeper. It seemed to me a golden opportunity as I expected her husband would be working for me the rest of the winter. However, it didn't work out so well. The young woman (she was not much over eighteen), started in doing the cooking and housework. But she soon took a violent fancy to one of my miners, a single young fellow and rather attractive, and from that time she was useless about the house. The young man did not return her affection though she soon left her husband. And when this young fellow came down with typhoid fever and was taken to the hospital she followed him to Lethbridge. He recovered and came back to work, but she did not, which events left me with a heavy burden of housework except for what little help my ageing and infirm mother could give me. Eva and the children had gone East late in November.

A week before Christmas during a spell of severe weather and deep snow, Charlie Harvie, who was then living in Turin, rode to the mine on horseback to tell me that my Grandmother Coe was very ill and wanted to see me. As I had no saddle-horse then I told him I would go across the coulee on foot and join him on the east side. The rest of the trip was about six miles and we rode his horse in turns—one walking while the other rode. I found my grandmother very sick indeed with a pneumonic condition, and in bed. However, she was determined that she be allowed to get up, and begged me to help her, not realising her extreme weakness. I was able to remain by her bedside as she wished, the trade at the mine being very quiet for the Christmas season. Her extreme age—she was eighty-six—was against her and she lived only a day after I arrived. Ernie and I took her remains to Coaldale in a covered sleigh, and there we were met by Mr. Martin, the funeral director. She was buried from the Anglican Church in Lethbridge and laid beside my grandfather and Aunt Jessie.

Instead of being able to take it easy after the heavy autumn trade I found myself confronted with considerable dead work at the beginning of the New Year. First of all I must meet the

requirements of digging, or rather, completing an airshaft.

Then I struck a fault in the workings as I neared the heavy hill cover—a broken coal seam with a lot of rock and dirt to shovel out of the road. I found too that this fault or break was allowing water from my dam to seep through into the workings. I had to buy a tank car and hire a man to pump and haul out the water. These three items meant a lot of work to be done and paid for without any return in saleable coal. One steady customer we had through the winter months was Mr. Gwillim who was hauling slack coal for the H. G. MacDonald Company who had the contract of putting in the cement work on the drops. Most of the ditches had already been completed. By this time I needed only a couple of miners besides myself to handle the minework. One of these was Jack Fleming (we always called him Mac in distinction from Jack Adair). Mac was sleeping in a spare bedroom in my mother's house for the winter.

During the forenoon of March 19th as I was sleeping, having worked night shift, Mac was down in the mine. Mother was over in my house washing dishes, her own house being about seventy-five feet away. She woke me suddenly when she exclaimed, "My house is on fire!" I jumped up and saw the smoke coming out under the roof and eaves. When I asked her where I could find her money, jewellery and most important papers, she told me they were in her desk in the living-room. I ran over, opened the east door, and saw lots of smoke but no flame. I found her desk quickly and took it to the door. If it had been a little smaller I wouldn't have had any trouble, but it was big enough to get stuck in the doorway. While I was struggling with it the flames swooped down with a sudden curl from the ceiling, licking across my face, hair and bare hands. I could feel the hot breath pass over me as I struggled harder and harder. Then I had the desk outside and shut the door to keep out the draught of air. Then I drew my hand across my face, and my fingers came away covered with the outer skin of my face. I did not try to go in the house again, but went back and sent Mother to the mine for Mac that he might get medical help for my burns. When they got back the house was completely gone. I directed them to put baking-soda

and vaseline over my face which had all been seared. My eyebrows were gone and my hair singed. I put a flour sack over my head and small oatmeal sacks over my hands and wrists before I went out in the air. I knew I had already been too much exposed to the open air when first burned. I directed Mac to drive me up to Henry Oliver's (it was several miles), in my little runabout. Mac had never driven a car before but he was game to try, and got me there safely. I had hoped that Mr. Oliver might be able to take me to a doctor in Lethbridge in his closed car. But the mud was too deep to venture it, and Mrs. Oliver phoned her doctor. He advised that I should go in right away, but hearing that the roads were impassable, he advised her over the phone. He told her to apply a mixture of lime-water and oil (she had olive oil on hand), to my face and hands. This worked fine until huge blisters began to swell up on my face and the back of my hands. These gave me so much pain that by night I could do nothing but walk the floor. Henry stayed up with me till after midnight, then Mrs. Oliver got up to see if she could find any means of easing the pain. But the blisters were so tight and painful I could not get any relief. When eight o'clock came around she phoned the doctor, and he advised the blisters be pierced to let the water out. Henry took a sharp darning-needle but it didn't work because the skin over the burns was too tough and thick. Finally, with considerable difficulty, he managed to cut the skin. When the fluid ran out and the skin sank on top of the raw flesh the burns were terribly tender. However, as we continued the treatment I improved, and we also made use of another good preparation received from a lady in Turin. I was fortunate in that I made a quick recovery, although the scars remained for months and even years after. I did not write Eva of my accident until about a week after it happened, when I was able to tell her I had enjoyed the best of care, and was over the worst. I advised her not to return until the weather was better. (She had written me of very severe storms and mountains of snow in the east during February and March, which would have made the crossing on Northumberland Strait very bad at that time). She did not finally decide whether or not to return at that time until she had written me again and found out more particulars to her own

satisfaction. By the time I got her letter I was able to urge her not to shorten her visit. Besides that I knew the children were both getting over a severe case of mumps.

Now that Mother's house was gone, I bought a small office building from the construction company as soon as I was able to get around—one big enough that she could have two rooms while she used it as a dwelling. I also got a second one that the miners might use as a bunk-house; paying for both of these in coal. It was only a couple of weeks after I was burned until I was able to be around again, although the new skin was very tender and sensitive for a long time. Both Mr. and Mrs. Oliver, after seeing the shape I was in, were amazed to see me recover so quickly. For my part their kindness will always be vivid in my memory.

That spring I got forty or fifty Russian Poplar cuttings from Andy Hilliard, survey engineer who had just been appointed water-master and was beautifying the grounds of his new Lethbridge Northern residence. When it came to trees and flowers, he and I talked the same language. I planted them south and west of the garden rectangle I had ploughed up the year before, with the idea of starting a shelter belt. And now came the announcement that the Lethbridge Northern was completed and water would be turned into the ditches. But unexpected trouble at the head-gates delayed the flow of water for several weeks. Fortunately no one suffered as far as I know, for 1923 proved to be a wet season, and crops grew well without irrigation. For my part I was taking great pride in my little patch of rhubarb and onions put in well-prepared ground under the south windows of the kitchen.

Back in Prince Edward Island "winter lingering chilled the lap of May," and Archie, wanting ice cream for his birthday party, was able to find some heavy icy snow on the north side of a big evergreen. It was June before they were able to make many of the visits they planned, and late in summer before they arrived home. I went to Medicine Hat to meet them, and my arrival was quite unexpected as far as the children were concerned. On account of changing trains there they had not been put to bed in their berths, but lay half asleep on top of the blankets until their train arrived at the Medicine Hat depot.

Once there their mother lost no time in hustling them, stupid and sleepy as they were, aboard the Lethbridge train. She had not seen me—had really no time to look around for me—and was not even sure I had come. When she was settled in the day coach, the children sitting beside her, I walked in and said "Hello" to Archie who was just sitting down after getting himself a drink of water. Archie had never been shy with strangers and always spoke in a friendly way to anyone who addressed him. Now he answered "Hello," in a friendly impersonal way as I sat down beside him, and gave me no further attention while he watched the train men going back and forth. Lois had been a bit train-sick and did not even see me, being half asleep. And so the train got under way.

Then my wife turned to Archie. "Who is that?" she said, pointing to me. Now he really looked at me for the first time. Before that I had just been another passenger to him. "Why—it's Dad!" he said slowly, and we began to get acquainted all over again. We got into Lethbridge in the wee small hours of a beautiful summer morning. I had left my little open truck there, and as soon as we got trunks and suitcases aboard, we were on our way home for an early breakfast which my mother had been preparing for our coming. Although not too strong, she had been doing her best to make ready.

My little truck was nothing if not serviceable and dependable and we found it very satisfactory over the next winter and spring until we got a nice closed-in car, a Grey-Dort, in the summer of 1924. My coal trade was much as the year before, except that we had more trouble with the water that was seeping in. In my spare time I worked on the upstairs part of the house for which we were beginning to feel the need, as it would mean two extra bedrooms and a store-room under the eaves. I had already placed a small granary near the kitchen door, and this served as a utility room for washing machine (the old-fashioned wooden dolly washer), kindling, and a dozen other things. At times too, it served as a play-room for the children that visited us, along with our own. With the truck to run back and forth we got a fairly large supply of groceries from Diamond City, as being the nearest and most convenient. We got our mail there, too. Mr. Wyatt, one of the salt of the

earth, was our postmaster. We traded for groceries at Lawrence and Dalrymple's, and found them splendid to deal with.

When my wife got back from the East I had a great surprise for her, so I thought! We had a new minister in the Methodist church at Iron Springs (that was before church union), and I had found out he had come from Prince Edward Island, and had formerly been a friend and neighbour of the family. Now I asked her to guess who the new minister was. She laughed and said, "Harrison Villett." Then she told me she had been visiting at his mother's just before she left P.E.I., and had been told he was near Lethbridge. The parsonage at Iron Springs was a modest little four-room bungalow. It had been moved to Iron Springs for that purpose when Earle Dickout had sold out and moved away to British Columbia a few years before. A plot on the Tennant farm had been chosen as the site, and church services were still held in the one-room schools around. But no palace could have accorded a warmer welcome to Rev. Mr. Villett's new bride than the one she enjoyed that autumn. It was indeed a royal reception she received from all the neighbours within miles. Too short indeed was their stay at Iron Springs where they began a promising work. In 1925 they moved to the newly-built United Church in Taber.

It was common knowledge that the C.P.R. would build a branch line from Kipp to the Little Bow once irrigation was sure. Their survey was soon an accomplished fact. And people in the district wondered just where the various town sites would be. The question of the Picture Butte location was decided by the fact that the owner of the half-section where the hill was located, had promised to donate all the non-irrigible land immediately surrounding the Butte for a town site. The matter of the railway station settled, small business establishments moved into the vicinity almost overnight. A branch lumber yard was opened up by the Becker Lumber Company. Mrs. Scully, a widow, opened a small restaurant. Joe Frank moved a little blacksmith shop to the west edge of his quarter close to the slough in the coulee. Skundberg and Odegard went into the garage business, and I think there was a second garage. Bill Shaw started a draying business with his teams. Bert Foster started up a butcher business around the hamlet. Most of the

buildings were not much to look at, simply tar-papered shacks. The first big building was the dance hall put up by Wes Keopke who had been farming in the district for some years. Dried-out farmers from other parts of the South were looking towards new homes in this irrigated district, and owners of more than a half-section were looking for a chance to sell, as the irrigation taxes during the first year were terribly high. In fact they were so high that adjustments had to be made the next year, else land-owners could not keep going.

Meanwhile, in June of 1924, our second daughter was born. My wife had gotten along so well with her second confinement at home that she decided against going to hospital if Dr. Inkrote would come to the house, and if Mrs. Powell would be available to stay with her. She was fortunate in being able to make these arrangements. We still had no phone, the nearest one being at Oliver's, four miles away. On the evening of June 27th she told me I better phone for Dr. Inkrote. I found out he had gone out on a similar case and I could not get in touch with him. So I phoned for a Lethbridge doctor who said he would be right out. This news proved such a shock to my wife that all need for a doctor disappeared, and she lay down and slept the night through. About eight o'clock, as there still appeared to be no need for him, he said he had to go to Lethbridge hospital to take part in a scheduled operation, but would be back immediately afterwards. My wife, who was up and about, heard his remark and instructed me to tell him not to come back at all unless I phoned for him. About noon she sent me to phone for Dr. Inkrote again. He was just in from a similar case and said he would be along right after dinner. He made the trip from Diamond City in quick time, arriving just as our second daughter, a fine healthy little girl, had made her appearance. It is only fair to say that Mrs. Powell, who had been with her all this time, was a most trustworthy and experienced midwife. On his arrival the doctor checked that everything had gone well in his absence. In view of this I felt it would be unthankful to complain that my telephone call to the first doctor in Lethbridge had cost me forty dollars in mileage expense.

I had an experience which I found rather unpleasant, and my

wife somewhat frightening, when an enemy I had inadvertently made the year before while being treated for burns at the Oliver home, went off his head. He had come from the East, and I had never known him well enough to find out that he disliked me, or why he should have done so. My first inkling of any bad feeling on his part came when one of the Oliver boys called to tell me to watch out for him, as they saw him with a shot-gun and heard him mutter he was going out to get me. His parents had been greatly alarmed by this and wanted me to keep out of his sight until they got him headed back to his home in the East. He started back in a few days and never returned. I heard of his death not long after.

Late in July we had a very pleasant visit from Eva's brother (whom we had visited before in B.C.), his wife and four children. He was then principal at Penticton, but had enjoyed several months' leave of absence. They were now on their way home from P.E.I., after a long visit with the grandparents. None of them had ever visited the prairie before, and driving on the fine summer evenings while the landscape was green and lovely gave them much to admire in the long stretches of plain, the far horizons, and the glorious sunsets. My sister-in-law Fleta was loud in her admiration and thought she might enjoy living in our prairie land.

There was no school near and my wife had been teaching Archie at home for some time. About the only time the children were in school was for church or Sunday school. Meanwhile, as soon as Eva was able to go out, the superintendent of the Battersea Sunday school had practically commandeered her to take charge of one of the classes. So we went every Sunday morning and she taught the class with the baby wrapped in a blanket beside her. That is, when the weather and roads permitted. Archie had a good small pony to ride, and at eight years old his mother used to send him across the coulees to Diamond City (about four miles), to get the mail, to send money orders due to Department of Mines at Edmonton, to pay grocery bills and get supplies at the store. For a young boy he was most trustworthy, and would always come back with all orders and monies correct to the cent. This was a great help to me as it saved me much time for my work about the mine.

One morning while I was working in the mine he suffered what could have been a very serious accident. He was carrying hay on a fork when it happened. Luckily Lois was outside near him. He had a three-tined fork and was standing on top of a half-stack in the corral when the fork slipped and the tine went right through the back part of his lower leg.

He told Lois to go in and tell his mother, who happened to have the baby, now about four months old, in her bath. She quickly grabbed up the baby, wrapped her in her towel and blankets, and set her down right in the middle of the big bed. (She was too young then to unswaddle herself and fall off). Eva ran outside quickly and found the boy standing dry-eyed and still on top of the stack. Climbing up she asked him if he could let her pull the tine out. He said, "Yes" and made no whimper or cry as she did so. Then she supported him as he came off the stack, and asked whether she should carry him to the house. He said, "No, I can walk!" But she took his weight as much as possible. By the time they reached the house and he was ready to lie down, his face was pretty green. When she took off his denim overalls she found the tine had passed right through the back of the muscle, leaving a small round hole on each side. It did not seem to be bleeding much. She kept bathing it with hot water and disinfectant, and when I came up continued the treatment. The wound seemed to give but little pain, and soon healed without any infection. But for a long time blue scars were visible.

The land sales of the district went very slow as long as the high irrigation rates of \$5.50 an acre were in force. But quickly the "Home Place" plan was worked out and came into effect. Then the farmers flocked in from dried-out areas, buying the land on terms through the Colonisation Department, and securing as homes in many cases houses that were standing unoccupied in the ghost-towns nearby, where coal mines had been shut down.

Now the question of schools was becoming an important one—and the setting up of a local Post Office. In 1925 a successful petition for building a school at Picture Butte town site was launched, and another for a school three miles farther north at a large cement drop known as Granite Falls. A petition for

Wes Koepke to open a post office known as Picture Butte Post Office was granted. Joseph Morgan was then school inspector for the district and he gave us advice towards organising a school district at Picture Butte, and planning the building of a one-room school. My wife, Wes Koepke, and Bert Foster comprised the first school board. In the spring of 1926, as there were several children in the district ready to attend school, temporary quarters were rented in the hall and school was opened in May with Miss Jessie Redig in charge. During the summer the new one-room school was built on the west side of the road. As my wife was anxious that there be Sunday school Mr. Koepke generously allowed her the use of his hall and piano on Sunday afternoons and a small union Sunday school was opened.

As far as my coal trade was concerned the influx of settlers was a help, though many of the newcomers did not have much cash at that time. Bill Shaw with his teams and Bill Venables hauled a good many orders for me, and during the winter of 1925-26 I kept a car of coal close to the town site for the greater convenience of customers. However, the latter did not prove satisfactory as the coal, always rather soft, slacked too much with the double handling, and when my young brother-in-law (who had been with me for the winter) went away I discontinued.

Any spare time I had, found me working on my gardens and groves. I put in small fruits—strawberries, raspberries, currants and gooseberries in the shelter of my poplar belts. We had a triangular driveway around the house at the end of the main road, and Eva thought it would be an ideal place for a V-shaped flower garden. I quite approved of the idea and fenced it in with some Page wire I had on hand. Through the top of the fence-posts I threaded an old mine cable which effectually stopped any marauding animals. From the coulee I brought up hawthorn and silver willow to make a hedge inside the fence and cable. The west side of the house made the third side of the triangle. I brought up a few wild roses, saskatoon, and chokecherry, and set them out in little clumps to provide shelter for the flowers. Mr. Larter gave me some choice roses and iris from his gardens. Other neighbours gave us other perennials.

Mr. Hilliard gave me spirea and other choice plants. We put in sweet peas, pansies, hollyhocks, perennial peas, tulips, snapdragon, and tiger lilies. Golden glow and wild cucumber adorned one corner. The flower garden was a great pleasure to us all during the years we lived there. Once in a while a humming-bird would come and flit around.

Joe Frank had a relative working with him in his blacksmith shop. He had just come from Europe and couldn't understand or speak a word of English. However, he was a strong, friendly, pleasant-faced fellow, and looking for work. I hired him as my helper, and called him Joe. I found him most willing and a tireless worker, but he had a lot to learn about mining. At the very peak of the coal season, when we were pulling pillars, I was sitting cross-legged on the ground one day while setting in timber. Joe was working with his pick when it suddenly slipped and made a wide arc. The point of the pick crashed right into my shin bone, and I nearly lost consciousness from pain. Joe had carried me out of the mine before I came awake to what was going on. That wound took a long time to heal as small chips of bone kept coming out day after day. It was very sensitive for long after that, and the scars are still plain. Joe went farming after he quit working for me and became a very successful farmer before he died.

The new Picture Butte school was opened in the autumn of 1926, and was given the name we had suggested when asked by the Department at Edmonton. And it was even now becoming evident that the steady increase in pupils would mean the opening of a second room before spring, even if it meant the renting of the hall once more. During 1926 we got two families quite close to the mine, with several children of school age. Ole Lerohl who had been grain buyer for a short while for the new Ellison elevator (an Alberta Pacific elevator had gone up too), secured a large acreage just south of me, part of it non-irrigible coulee land. When he first moved in he found himself up against the task of cleaning out rattlesnake dens, and the boys dug them out in great numbers. We were still killing a fairly large number in the spring when they first came out of their dens. Clifford Wildman, an English boy, who had worked for Hilliard's before he came to me, used to help me kill off these

snakes of which he had quite a horror, and he always kept his eyes open. One fine holiday when he and a friend thought they wanted to visit the little island in the river, I assured him there would be no snakes there, as they could not swim. He found out different when they sat down on the ground after their long walk, and he sure told me so that night!

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

SOME INCIDENTS THROUGHT THE YEARS

IN THE spring of 1926 Jim Pollock built and opened up a good-sized grocery store on the town site, on what was then the main street. It was a great convenience for the buying public and a forward step for the new town.

My wife's parents from Prince Edward Island made us a two weeks' visit that autumn. They had never been on the prairie before and found it all new and interesting, particularly the deeply-cleft coulees and steep cutbanks along the river. Our younger daughter, Eileen, aged two, coined a special name for them, "the two grandfathers," and it came about in rather odd fashion. Before they came she heard us talking of fixing up a room for "Grandfather." When they arrived she seemed surprised to see two instead of one person, and immediately labelled them "the two grandfathers." It amused them a lot to see how she clung to the term even after they became good friends. While they were here they had a chance to become acquainted with the Oliver's, the Harvie's, my uncle Ernie and Aunt Ruby, the Pollock's, and a few more they enjoyed meeting. I took them to the train at Lethbridge after their visit, as they were going on to British Columbia before returning east.

Since we had moved to the mine in 1922 we had not seen Ernie and Ruby very often, except when he came in for a load of coal. But that year we had them for Christmas dinner and spent a pleasant day together as I had a little more leisure than usual. As it turned out afterwards, I was glad that it was so. For it turned much colder in January and one day when Ernie was in for coal the afternoon became very stormy and windy before he got home. Because he was very thin and frail he suffered a lot from this exposure though he did not complain, and still kept on his feet.

One night late in the month he went out to do his evening chores. Shortly afterwards Ruby heard something fall on the porch. She went out and found him sprawled in the doorway, and the kindling wood he had been carrying was scattered around. She was sure he was dead and ran to the nearest neighbours about a mile away. He jumped in his car and brought me word, just as I was thinking of going to bed. I went down at once and took charge, with my mother going down the next morning to keep Ruby company till after the funeral. Ernie was buried beside his parents in Lethbridge and Ruby soon came to live with us as it was unthinkable that she should go on living by herself in that big solitary house. She decided it would be best for her to sell, or else lease her place, and have me build her a small house close by my own. There was a small new building on Ernie's place which I thought I could easily remodel into a nice three-room house. I moved this east of my own fruit garden and shelter belt. Ruby bought the extra lumber needed and paid me for the time I spent fixing it up. And I worked on it every spare minute, so that she was able to move in that summer. I was happy that she liked her new little home so much, though of course she missed the one she had lived in for nearly twenty years. Here she was closer to us than she had even been to her neighbours, and the children were lots of company for her. Her cocker spaniel soon made himself at home in his new surroundings. She had brought all the furniture she needed for living-room, bedroom and kitchen. She had her piano (she had taken a music course by correspondence after trading one of her teams for a piano), and in her spare time she was always busy with her needlework. With the plainest and simplest of cloth, threads and dyes she produced the loveliest results and she had a store of finished work that was worth a great deal if she had been willing to sell them. Rather she used many of them as gifts.

In the spring of 1927 I rented forty acres of farm land close to my leased mineral rights. I seeded it to wheat and had a splendid crop that fall. At the top of a coulee just north of the house I had put in a farm reservoir with teams and scrapers. There was a good irrigation ditch above that supplied it with water regularly. This water was fine for stock and for washing,

but for cooking and drinking we hauled water from springs around the mine. This latter had a good flavour except for a suspicion of soda or sulphur. We had another store opened up in town that summer. It was the J. M. Gibbons store, brought up in sections from Maleb. Mr. Gibbons also secured an irrigated quarter a mile north of me. This was the time the new farmers were beginning to think of growing beets—were being advised to grow hoe crops. And many immigrants were coming from Central Europe in the hope that they could find such work. Hard workers these were, and anxious to save and buy land for themselves. At that time Eva was keeping track of the agricultural and other changes of note in the district, for the previous autumn she had taken on the job of correspondent for the *Lethbridge Herald* which at that time was keenly interested in the progress being made under irrigation on the Lethbridge Northern. Picture Butte had no church at that time, but church services of a community type were held in the pleasant new schoolroom, and had a splendid attendance. Good student pastors and some visiting pastors from city churches provided us with preaching, and the union Sunday school was flourishing. The Chatauquas were introduced to the community, and gave entertainment for a week or so in the autumn, using the Keopke hall as a theatre. There were no cinemas. School fairs were held during these years at Iron Springs, the children entering a large range of garden produce and cooking. Aspiring musicians had a chance of instruction by Miss Augusta Atzinger, now Mrs. Lee Quinnell, as she travelled a wide district on both sides of the Little Bow. Today she is still an eminently successful music teacher, residing in the village of Picture Butte.

It was a good summer—a busy summer, but I decided we could take a breathing-spell for a few days. We had a good Dodge and drove down to visit relatives in Hoosier, Saskatchewan. Some of our tires were not up to par and gave me some trouble on hot days when travelling. We travelled by way of Retlaw, Travers (almost deserted), Bow Slope Ferry, Brooks, Duchess, Patricia (with a million sand holes in the road), Jenner and Atlee (driving on an old railway grade and without even a wire fence for company), crossing on the bridge at Bindloss, up through the Acadia Valley country and through

the thousand rolling hills between that and Alsask, we made our way. We were indeed glad when we arrived safely in Hoosier, after most of two days on the road.

During the week we were there we visited such places as Kindersley and Smiley and saw many high heavy crops. Most of that country was looking forward to a good harvest. Coming back we drove south on the Meridian Line from Alsask to Empress. It was a clear scorching day. The thermometer we had installed on the back of the car rose to 120 degrees. We stopped at Schuler that night and made camp. It was cool and clear in the morning, but soon got hot as ever. We had lunch at a little wayside spring west of Medicine Hat. Just after that our tires began to bother us. I am sure we had at least half-a-dozen flats along that piece of lonely road, and to this day I don't know how we managed it home without "running on the rim." When we got home our flower garden was a wilderness of bloom with hollyhocks higher than our heads, and wild cucumber vines with their feathery white bloom twined all around the old cable fence.

I was still in competition with the Jones Mine by fits and starts, as every new year saw a different operator start up in the autumn. One family that came in from Winnipeg brought us considerable excitement for a few weeks. It all began when a wild-eyed, dark-haired, not-so-young woman knocked at our back door one cold morning. When Eva opened the door she practically pushed her way in. Her face was swollen and she talked in great excitement. She wanted us to hide her from her husband who was after her with the butcher knife, after beating her black and blue. She wanted to know if we couldn't get the police or phone them. We had no phone and we had no clue as to what it was all about. We had never seen her before. She calmed down enough to tell us she was living at the Jones Mine, and it was her husband who was working it. She said she was afraid to go back, so I promised I would phone the police at Coalhurst. I phoned from Picture Butte. They came out and wanted her to lay a charge. She would not, and we persuaded her to go home. She came back a second time and was willing to lay a charge. The police came out, but this time they could not find the husband. We found out more about them at this

time. The man with his wife and four children had come to work after being told there was much money to be made in mining coal. Believing this the man spent lavishly of what he had saved, hiring men to work for him right and left. All the time he had no sleeping accommodation for them. They slept so close together on the floor that there was no room to step around, and jealous fights became the order of the day. When the police arrived all the hired men and fair-weather friends disappeared, but the law kept on looking for the missing husband. The wife was advised to go and stay somewhere where she would be safe. She did not and they soon learned the husband had come back. Then they heard that suspicious lights were being seen after dark. The policeman decided to stick around for a while, so came over to my place and parked his car behind my buildings. He spent the night sleeping on the sofa and early in the morning he slipped over to the mine. The man wasn't there, and the wife and children denied seeing him. The police went back to Coalhurst. In a day or two they came back and caught him at home with his family. They lugged him into court although his wife pleaded that he be let off. At her intercession he was given suspended sentence, and they immediately moved away. I heard later that he got along all right in his new work and location.

We found out later that the boys had been telling in school of how their mother sent them down into the coulee by night with food for their father. And a while after when I was examining some old airshafts of my own mine I came across an old mattress and some bedding in a dry sheltered niche.

One of the worst blizzards I ever saw swept across the country about the seventh of December. There had been a week of cold weather and quite a lot of snow was on the ground, as yet without drifting. But now it was a strange, calm grey morning—brooding but not threatening. I didn't like the look of the day nor the stillness, and I told the children they better stay home from school. They had been driving the two miles and a half with a pony and cart or sleigh. After a while I decided to go down to the mine and I took Archie along—the men were not working that day. I was driving Sally, our mine pony, hitched to a stone-boat to bring up some coal for the house.

I was busy well up to the noon hour, hauling out water and cleaning up around the workings. Suddenly, as I looked down the coulee on coming to the mouth of the entry, I saw a thick white cloud that hid all the hills from my sight. I realised we had no time to lose if we were to beat the storm. I filled the box on the stone-boat quickly and we started up the mine road. Archie was terribly scared by the thickness and blinding fury of the tempest. In fact I myself had never been out in such a devastating storm. During the first part of our trip we got a little shelter from the hills on the north side of the road. When we reached the top and the level prairie we felt its full force. It was a north wind and Sally wanted to go straight south with it. But I knew she had to head south-east, and although I could not see anything I went to her head to lead her. I told Archie under no condition to let go of the box. I don't know what all I threatened him with if he did not hold on tight. He was really frightened. Some way or other we made that quarter-mile to the gate-post where the road led to the house. I hadn't known exactly where we were until I saw that post. We stopped at the east door of the house, our heads, faces, and even eyes, covered by a coating of ice and snow. Sally's head, lashes, and nose were even worse, and her mane was completely covered. Eva said she had been just as badly surprised by the sudden onslaught. She thought it was a tractor roaring up to the door. Looking out the window she could see nothing but the swirling snow-cloud against the window-pane. We were very lucky. In the same way, at that noon hour, the storm had struck all the settlements north of the Little Bow and to the west of us. Pupils and teachers in country schools had to stay there all night. It was not fit for man or beast to venture out till after midnight. One little boy from Wigan who had been home for lunch, was caught on his way back to school at Coalhurst. Family, neighbours, and police hunted for hours and days without finding any sign. Then in the spring a farmer living two miles south found the pitiful remains in one of his straw-stacks. The child had been caught by the blizzard and drifted helplessly before it.

Evergreen trees were almost unknown to us in those days, and the children were more than delighted when a few days before Christmas a shapely little Christmas tree about five feet

long came from their grandparents in Prince Edward Island. It was a lovely little spruce, so well wrapped that it had suffered no damage on the way. They really enjoyed fixing up that first Christmas tree, and I think we parents got just as much pleasure from it.

During my spare time after the New Year I began to give some thought to re-modelling the front part of the house which we had never liked. While I had fixed two upstairs rooms as bedrooms, lining the rafters with a good quality of smooth building-paper, the outside appearance of the roof was such that I decided to lower it and at the same time add a large room on the front. For several years the fourteen by sixteen room which served as combined living-room and dining-room (as well as accommodating the piano, large heater, and Winnipeg couch), had been too cramped for the number who were using it. We decided on building a large room (the full twenty-four feet in length), and I felt I could do most of the work myself, if I had the advice and help of a master carpenter in changing about the roof. It was not long before the very man showed up. He was a Mr. MacLean who was visiting his son, then a grain-buyer at Picture Butte. With Mr. MacLean's help and under his direction, the crew I got together for the occasion, cut out and lowered the centre part of one side of the roof over the new room. We were all greatly pleased with the improvement in appearance. Also the front door which had previously opened to the north, now faced the sunny east looking down towards the winding river. We had good light too, as I put in several windows, one a long piano window. Of course all this took time, and it was more than a year before I had things fixed up in the way we wanted. But my expense was at a minimum, with me doing my own work in spare hours.

The summer of 1928 did not seem unusual until the middle of July when heavy threatening clouds floated around morning, noon and night. I think it was July 30th when the great storm broke. There had been a fine morning with hot sun. About two in the afternoon an all-enveloping lurid grey-black cloud swirled up from the northern horizon. On its western tip a racing tongue of dust spear-headed a tornado that threw about small buildings like matchsticks. One separator was

thrown clear over the cook-car. I had gone to Lethbridge with Clure Oliver. He arrived home to find his beautiful stand of wheat completely gone, for after the wind came the rain. And after a lull in the rain came the hail; first a few huge scattered round stones that looked like golf balls. One woman stepped out in her front yard when she saw the first lone one come down. She thought it was a white cup. When the stones began to come faster and faster they pelted chickens, ducks, turkeys, and even fair-sized pigs to death. They broke window-panes and broke the screens. They battered the hands extended to close open windows. The crop was hailed from Barons east to Turin on a strip of the best farm lands from four to six miles wide. And through that district they neither harvested nor threshed, many suffering much hardship and want during the next year.

I arrived home that evening expecting to meet the same devastation; I expected a total loss of crop and gardens. What was my surprise to find out that my wife knew nothing of the hailstorm that had wiped out the crop farther north. She had seen the skies darken and felt the wind. She had run out to put the half-grown chickens in their coops. With Archie helping her they battled the firsts gusts of rain and small hail, put them in and closed the doors. By that time the rain had stopped, the air was still, and a bright beautiful rainbow lay across the coulee. The boundary of the heavy hail lay a mile north of me, where damage was thirty per cent on Glen Childer's farm. My grain showed hardly any hail damage.

In the autumn of 1928 I decided it was about time for me to open up new entries and workings on my coal lease. The weight of the water on the roof and the amount of dirt that had to be moved was much too expensive for me to continue in the old workings. So I pulled pillars. This kind of coal-digging was much faster than working in rooms and entries. So I needed fewer miners than usual that season.

Now that we had neighbours' children coming in to play with ours I wanted something in the way of playgrounds for them. I put up a strong plank teeter-totter in the yard across from the garden and a tall swing between two discarded telephone posts. It had a heavy rope cable and a plank seat. There was nothing flimsy about that swing and that teeter-totter when

the children bunched up on them. Then I had a landing platform on the side of the reservoir for when they went bathing or swimming. I had a pretty little boat I bought from John Beiswanger (he built it himself), but I did not keep that around too long, fearing the children might upset it.

Among the changes and improvements I made in the house were double windows in the dining-room that looked out over the flower garden; double windows in the new bedrooms upstairs; and changing over the small bedroom downstairs into a bathroom. We got a portable bathtub which I encased in a wooden frame. We had no running water, but the tub could be drained through the floor. Somewhat unusual in its setting, but we got no end of satisfaction in its use. The new living-room was lined, both wall and ceiling, with Donnacona board in soft pleasing shades. I put in a hardwood floor, and the girls made it their duty and pleasure to keep it varnished and waxed. By this time we all thought it was high time to get the house painted on the outside. When building the new room I had removed the old siding which was becoming so warped that it would not absorb a covering. Now the whole house was shingled—walls as well as roof—and the idea of buying paint meant a lot more money than I felt I could afford. My wife had been in favour of white paint for the body of the house, but that was the most expensive. When the merchant with whom I dealt made me an offer of two five-gallon tins of red barn paint that was of exceptionally good quality at a very attractive price, Eva and I talked it over and decided to use it, with a harmonising green stain for the roof. He had this paint in stock for some years, and it was a very pleasing shade. We never regretted that we put it on. Once we had the paint and shingle stain (the latter ordered from Eaton's) all the family were anxious to help put it on. And everyone of the family took a hand from time to time. Eva used to laugh sometimes as she took a look at us—perhaps Archie and Lois would be perched somewhere on the gentle slope of the roof—but everyone busy somewhere with a brush. When it was done in red and green, with white trimming under the eaves, it made a nice picture against the trees in the grove, as it stood outlined above the coulee edge. A picture that was a far cry from the look of that spot back in 1922!

In October of 1929 my wife's brother, who was a missionary in India, stopped in Calgary with his wife and children. They were on their way from the East after furlough. We were supposed to go up and visit with them in Calgary as they were due to catch a boat in Vancouver very soon. I was too busy at the mine to leave at that particular time, so Eva went and took the two little girls with her. They took the mail car as far as Lethbridge and Lois became quite car-sick. Very suddenly she developed all the symptoms of whooping cough which was going around. My wife was at her wits' end what to do, when she thought of her brother's three small children just starting back to India. But she decided to go on and meet them herself even if she had to leave the children elsewhere. As soon as she saw her sister-in-law Grace she told her, "I don't know just what I ought to do." "Think nothing of it," said Grace. "Ours have had it already." So they all had a fine visit together, staying at the Yale Hotel. Lois seemed to be considerably better by the time they came home, but both girls had developed a light case of that disease. Archie was lucky enough not to take it.

For several months I had been quite worried about Ruby, and so had Eva. Considering that she had a fairly good appetite and was living comfortably, her health seemed to be failing rapidly. She was developing a stiffness in her limbs that made her walk in a wooden fashion, though she did not complain of any pain. We took her to the doctor and he pronounced it a nervous condition, but his treatment did not seem to help her much. We wanted her to come over to the house and stay with us till she felt stronger. But no—she preferred to stay at home and sleep in her own bed. From that time on Archie and Lois had been going over regularly to help her with her chores, and Eva had been running over with something tasty to eat every little while. The end came very quickly and with little pain. Just after she got home from Calgary my wife noticed one day that although Ruby was sitting in her usual rocking-chair she was half-unconscious. She quickly called my mother to stay with her while she sent for me. I went and phoned the doctor, who advised me to get a nurse to stay with her. I got Mrs. Ann Finley, our neighbour, who was a practical nurse. We all sat by her bedside

that night, except for the children. Although she was alert to all we said and did, we could tell by her breathing that she was sinking fast. When the last flicker of breath had stilled we noticed a strange thing. The flame of the night lamp which had been clear and steady all night (it was now between three and four in the morning- began to flutter and waver as though it were alive. This lasted several seconds before it became steady again. And there was no draught in the room; the night was perfectly calm.

Ruby's sudden passing was a great shock to us all, as she was still but little over fifty. My mother, as her only heir, moved into her house, seeing it was somewhat roomier and had better light than her own.

Later that fall, during a wintry spell, while Archie was riding his pony home from town, he swung her sharply on an icy turn and she fell. His knee was hurt but we did not know how badly till a much later date. For the time being he was not able to take any care of it, though he hobbled around using a crutch for two or three days. Immediately after his fall I came down with a very severe case of flu, temperature up to 104, and a violent headache that lasted day after day. As I was absolutely helpless in bed Archie threw away his crutches in order to look after the chores, although some good neighbours warned him against doing so. Meantime Eva was looking after me day and night, and when nothing she could do seemed to break the fever we called in Mrs. Finley for advice. She advised I go to the nearest hospital right away. No doubt this was the only thing to do considering our isolation from medical care, but the rough roads I had to travel over made me even worse. For several days I was very sick with pneumonia and out of my head with fever. After a couple of weeks I was released from hospital, but was thin as a shadow and could hardly stand. My hair had nearly all fallen out, and as soon as I was able to walk in the open air and gain a little strength, I went around without anything on my head. The Raleigh man, Mr. MacMillan, told me he had found it very good to encourage growth and thickening of the hair on the head after illness.

Considering the state of the mine was the same as the winter before, and I could not think of opening a new entry after my

illness, I simply closed down for the year. It might have been a smart idea for me to start opening up the new workings as soon as spring came, but my health and strength were still so much below par that I did not feel I could work underground. In talking to Bert Wyman I remarked that I wished I could do some work outdoors in the sun for a while. He took me up quick. "You wouldn't work for me on the farm this summer, would you?" he said. "I've been looking all around for a man that's good with horses." I took him up as he offered good wages, and I stayed with him till after he had harvested his dry land crop on the Cameron. Archie, who was now in high school, looked after the chores around home. And so the summer passed, while my hair, as well as my strength, came back.

In the early fall I decided on a location for the new entry when I located a good seam on a branch coulee south of my buildings. There was a fairly good grade approach to the point on top where I would put my chutes. This time I would need an iron railroad about four hundred and fifty feet long, and I bought a lot of old iron rails from the Adams mine which was closed down. It was across the river.

Mac was with me once more and we worked long hours opening the new seam, fixing the grade for the incline, and getting old chutes torn down and new ones put up. We used a horse and gin to pull up the coal cars.

When hiring miners that fall I was fortunate in getting Ben Oliver, a good experienced man who had recently taken up an irrigated farm near Diamond City. When winter came he was looking for a job that would bring him some ready cash towards building his home and keeping his family. I also remember that his brother Joe, who was used to working in the big mines, was with me for a few days until he found a larger mine which was more to his liking. He had been in his new job only a short time when he was killed in a mine accident. We had a splendid trade that season and were well satisfied with the quality of our coal, while the trade kept up uncommonly well through the spring and summer of 1931.

Some time in the early thirties a real tragedy occurred at the Jones mine recently re-opened by Louis Gonzy, of Lethbridge, a man of much mining experience. We knew him quite well,

also his son Chester, a promising lad about twenty who was running the engine and hoist for his father. Our first intimation of trouble came when a knock at our door summoned my wife to meet a member of the R.C.M.P., who asked abruptly, "Where is the man who was killed?" Out of the corner of her eye she could see the police car outside the door with the Coroner from Lethbridge sitting inside. She said she felt half-dazed by his question, but answered, "There was nobody killed here!" "Oh yes. There was a man killed here this morning at the mine," he persisted. She was just as positive. "There couldn't have been; the men have just now gone down to work. No one had come up yet." Still the man was not satisfied, saying a phone call had come to Lethbridge that a man had been killed at the Warren Mine. Then she began to see light. The phone call must have been sent in from Picture Butte by someone who wanted the police to be able to locate the spot by using a well-known name. She explained this idea to the man and told him he better try over at the other mine. He did this immediately, and by watching carefully she could see that they were examining something lying on a cot outside the shack. By their sober manner she knew they had found the dead man. As soon as we came up at noon we went over and heard that Chester had been drawn into the drum by the cable, when some of his clothes caught while he was hoisting cars. The engine stalled, and when there was no answer to his signals the boy's father walked up the hill to find him wound inside the cable and dead.

Archie's knee which had been injured over a year before began to bother him a lot in the summer of 1931. He became so lame that I took him to Dr. Bryan in Lethbridge, who found that his leg was growing crooked. The X-rays showed some trouble at the knee, but were not clear, so the doctor advised me to take him to an X-ray specialist in Calgary at once, while the bones were still in the growing stage. The X-ray there showed he had suffered a green break in the upper leg at the time of his accident, and ever since the leg had been getting worse. I was fortunate in getting him into the Children's Red Cross Hospital in February of 1932, and Dr. R. B. Deane operated—breaking the bone of the upper leg and putting it in a full-length cast for over three months. During the time Archie

was in hospital he continued regularly with his Grade 11 studies which he had started the fall before at Picture Butte. I think Lorne Blackbourne was Picture Butte principal that year. He had to do his studying while lying on his back, which was not too good for his eyes. He was released from hospital just in time to take the departmental exams, a bit wobbly at first. So he spent a day or so visiting with some friends, the George Hannahs of Calgary, before we brought him home. Of course, he was still very dependent on his crutches but was able to sit up while he wrote his exams. He found it quite exhausting, but was happy when the results showed he had been successful. After several weeks he went back to Calgary for an examination, and then was allowed to discard the brace and crutches.

That fall a very clever young man, but inexperienced in teaching, was hired as principal in Picture Butte, and we decided it might be better for Archie to take his Grade 12 (quite a heavy course) at Iron Springs, where Leo Smith was then principal. Mr. Smith had a very high reputation as a teacher. I bought an old touring car, a 1920 Dodge, from George Ensign, and Archie drove back and forth to school until winter set in.

During winter weather he came home only on week-ends, boarding at Bert Wyman's and driving back and forth to school with them in a sleigh. He got through all his Grade 12 exams successfully, besides gaining a little bit of glory by making one hundred per cent in his algebra three. It was reported that protests had been made all across the province against that particular examination, as being far too difficult, and that no one else had made the full mark.

In July, 1933, we went to Vancouver by car to attend the wedding of Eva's youngest sister. I had a good serviceable Dodge and made the trip there and back with a fair amount of comfort and speed, with nothing more serious in the way of car trouble than one or two flat tires. Archie was a very good driver and anxious to drive as much of the journey as possible. We crossed the border at Kingsgate, on through Spokane and the desert country of Washington, for it was before the days of the Grand Coulee Dam and irrigation. The wedding was held in the Baptist Church at Kerrisdale, and Archie and myself had a hand in decorating the inside with summer greenery. As

I had never been to the Pacific coast before I, as well as the children, was delighted to see such thick green forests, so many tall ferns, and so many flowers, particularly roses. We were staying at the home of Eva's brother in Point Grey. He was principal of the new University Heights public school. As it was his vacation time he showed us most of the worthwhile sights of the city, and Eva had a chance to renew acquaintance with many relatives and old friends. For the first time I met several of my father's people, relatives I had never seen before. I met his Uncle Victor Warren and his wife, their son Harry (now Dr. Harry Warren), who had made himself an enviable name as an athlete and a Rhodes scholar; their daughter Nancy, now Mrs. Rod Bell; my Aunt Edith Loewen, whose son, General Charles Falkland, recently retired as Commander of the British Forces in the Far East; and my Aunt Maud Sweatman, of Agassiz, who was visiting my Aunt Edith at the time. All these had been strangers to me, but both myself and my wife found them very pleasant to meet. Then the children, and myself as well, liked the Vaucouver beaches—Locarno, Spanish Banks, and Kitsilano.

The Hudson Bay Gas and Oil Company were very busy drilling around Keho Lake that year, and I sold them many a ton of mine run coal. They had a big truck hauling steadily, and naturally we were all very curious as to whether they would strike oil. Now and again we would hear about the depth to which they had drilled, but nothing definite. The one definite thing was that the results should be kept secret. Over the years there has been a continuous activity of drilling in that district.

Beginning with the spring of 1932 I hired a girl to stay with my mother and look after her fires and household chores. It was arranged that Eva and I should look after cooking and supplying their meals while my mother, from her recently-acquired pension, would take care of her cash wages. Though inactive in many ways, she liked to work in her garden, work at embroidery, and read. Archie had persuaded her she should buy herself one of the new-fangled machines known as radios. Radios were not common then and it was the only one on the place, so the miners often dropped in to listen in the evenings, which meant a break in the monotony when she seldom went

out. Her friends from here and there kept her more than supplied with reading material. One fine birthday we had a birthday party for her with friends coming from Picture Butte and Iron Springs—ladies who had been her old friends. She enjoyed it very much. When Beatrice left to be married we had several other young women who stayed with her for short periods, until they too got married. After that a young married woman, wife of one of the men working for me, who had a small house close to hers, offered to take care of her altogether, taking over the meals from her own house. However, Velma still slept at home, and one morning in August she went over to find her charge unconscious and paralysed. The doctor said it was useless to take her to hospital—better to look after her at home. She lingered about four days in a state of coma. She was buried in the Iron Springs cemetery, the Coe plot in Lethbridge then being filled up.

There was great excitement and activity on the Lethbridge Northern that summer. It had been finally decided that a sugar factory would be built. Every train-stop from Kipp to Turin had some good reason why the factory should be built at that particular town, but Mrs. Rogers settled it all when she flew from Vancouver to look over the ground. And she did look over the ground in person. She settled on Picture Butte, on a quarter-section just east of the town site and at the top of the deep-cleft coulee gorge. Just why we never knew for sure, but the coulee gorge was the best possible drainage system for the water and waste, which in the case of Raymond sugar factory was at that time injuring good farm land. Clem Nimmons was owner of that quarter, having bought it from Joe Frank, and was quite glad to sell it, having been brought up as a bookman rather than a farmer. In no time a survey had been made and big machinery was on the job. Work began on the huge building and on a crescent-shaped row of houses to be put up for factory officials. Ole Lerohl put up a gravel-washing plant on his river bottom, and soon gravel for the work was available.

Late that summer my wife went for a few weeks' visit to her sisters in Saskatchewan, and while she was away I suffered one of the worst accidents I had ever known. Accidents had

been plentiful in my life and Eva often said, less in fun than in earnest, she thought I must have broken every bone in my body except my neck. Now it came awful close to that. When the day's shift was over at 5 p.m. there were usually a lot of cars left loaded at the bottom of the slope. (I had bought Malloy's old engine when it was put up for sale, so was not using horse and gin any longer). After supper Archie and I often went down; he would run the hoist and I would hook the loaded cars on the cable at the bottom. To save him from climbing up the tippie, I used to ride the loaded car up and dump it, then ride the empty car down. There were riders under the cable (rollers to help it slide). I rode one loaded car near to the top of the chute when the cable got over the end of the roller, pulled the car down in front, threw the car off the track, and me with it. I fell about twenty-two feet on the road below and the contents of the car on top of me. Luckily the car stayed hooked on the cable. It was a dark night, and Archie, watching the car come to the top, saw the light I had on my head go tumbling down. He shut the engine down and came out to find me partly covered with coal. I was perfectly conscious but I could not move hand or foot. I told Archie I thought my arms and legs were broken, and sent him to the nearby miners' shacks to get someone to move me. They took me up to the house and put me in bed, but I could not yet move a finger. The children and one of the men did all they could to dress the wound where my head was cut open and bleeding. Being a first aid man myself I was able to direct them, but my limbs were still paralysed. By morning I found myself able to move both arms and legs somewhat. I was much better. Lois told me that there was so much coal and hair in my head wound that she could not get it clean. They took me in to the doctor who cleaned and sewed it up; he also told me the paralysis was caused by the neck injury, for I had come very near breaking it. It was an injury that was to continue bothering me through the years.

The deep shaft mine at Shaughnessy was now supplying good coal and many farmers were getting trucks. I can say that the peak of my coal trade was over by 1935. With a farm truck a man could pick up better-screened coal when he went to the

towns on other business, and even bring a load for his neighbour. And with the building of the sugar factory Dave Young, recently of Shaughnessy, and Bill Scott, decided to open up a coal mine near the Picture Butte road. Several of my customers found these places closer for their coal supply, with a corresponding drop in my trade. Among the various miners I had over the years were several most interesting personalities. There was a Welshman, surname Griffiths, though we always called him Griff, who had spent many years at Reid Hill. He could sing like an angel, and when not busy mining, liked to raise chickens. I have not mentioned a very remarkable little mining pony I bought from Mrs. Goldie MacLaine in 1930. He had been a circus pony and taught many smart tricks. He was a pretty pinto and the small children who visited us on Sunday liked to ride him. His name was Bubbles. He was low and sturdy, just right for working in low seams. He was smart enough to pretend weariness after pulling cars, and when left alone a moment to rest he would shed his tired manner and go racing up the hill. And he never failed to pick a miner's pocket of a sack of tobacco if he had the chance—using his teeth. He was hit by the epidemic that took so many horses, and although he recovered for a time he was very listless and stiff-legged. I made a sunny stable for him in the side of the hill where he spent his last days. The new Northern Mine on the highway did not last long as heavy streams of water found their way into the workings and it was abandoned. It had been intended as a shaft mine.

I had an unpleasant lawsuit with one of my neighbours over a line fence on my mine property. The man, a well-off farmer, started up the old Jones mine in partnership with a miner who had previously worked for me. I had long ago surveyed the property line between the two leases, but had not thought it necessary to put in a line fence any farther than the level top-land. Now I discovered he intended to put an incline slope over my broken land and coulee road, and I decided it was high time I put in the rest of the fence. While I was doing so he had the temerity to phone the police to arrest me as I was interfering with his mining operations. The case was tried in Lethbridge under Magistrate W. A. Hamilton. Of course, he

lost, but it meant considerable trouble and expense for me. It meant more expense for him, and in the end he was not able to go ahead.

About this time I thought, and Archie agreed with me, that it would be wise to get a truck of our own in order to compete in the delivery of coal from our mine. This we did, and found many other opportunities to haul other goods for the increasing demand around the town and district. We got a good second-hand two-ton truck. That was considered a big truck in those days, and it soon paid for itself. In 1936 I had a good man for general top work. His name was George Robinson, and he used to look after the mine ponies for me. On Valentine Day he went down to find a new colt in the mine stable, a real tiny one. We called her Kittens.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE SUGAR FACTORY A MILESTONE

THE SUGAR factory in Picture Butte was opened in the fall of 1935 and the beet run began. Mr. Bentall, of the Dominion Construction Company in Vancouver, had been in charge of the building work. A man of Christian life and principle he had taken part in church and Sunday School work while here. He had also been prime mover in the construction of the Bentall Swimming Pool not far from the school site. It was in use for several years. The school itself had been enlarged from year to year. Melvin Godfrey, of Magrath, opened the Melody Theatre. New business places and cafes opened up on the main street. Feed-yards were established along the head of the coulee on the Pollock farm by such ranchers as MacMillans and Mitchells. The watermaster, Andy Hilliard, had been transferred to Monarch, and A. J. Branch took his place. While many of the younger people found employment in the sugar factory, some of the pioneers took jobs with the L.N.I.D. Tom Anderson, Bert Graham, Tom Wyman, Charlie Harvie, and Art Norman were among the latter, rising later to executive positions. Every tillable acre on the project was coming under cultivation and very little prairie sod left except along the coulees and the river. My aged cowman friend, Johnny Wright, had made his home on the river bottom close to the Monarch bridge. I had occasion to visit him during the summer of 1936 and found him active and alert in spite of a recent severe accident. He had a family farming his place as he was well over eighty, but took great enjoyment in recalling the days when he left his home in Texas to work on Alberta cattle ranches.

Diamond City and Commerce had long since been ghost towns as far as coal mines were concerned, and the houses there

were being rapidly taken from their sites by farmers around. The coal mine at Coalhurst was still engaged in shipping coal, and the town was fairly large. Then on a mild December day came the great underground explosion that took the lives of sixteen miners in their distant workings. The rescue operations went on for days, but the mine was never opened again for work. Most of the town people moved to other places.

The little town of Iron Springs (one mile west of its old location) suffered much from fire and hail. Several times the windows of the town were demolished by hail, and fire struck twice. The first fire cleaned out one side of the street, a few years later the other side went. Grain elevators and large stores were among buildings destroyed. Both the Angus MacMillan and the Maloney stores were large structures newly established, but were never re-opened. Turin town was established at the end of the steel close to the Little Bow, and Arrowsmiths took over keeping the Post Office there. Shaughnessy as a mining town enjoyed fair growth, and a large hotel with bar was built there. Two artificial lakes in the district became very popular for fishing and boating. These were Keho Lake and Park Lake. A lot of low-lying land had been flooded so that they were greatly extended as compared to the original body of water. A moving spirit in planting young trees around Park Lake was J. I. McDermott, of Coalhurst, who with his boys helped to make it the beauty spot it now is. Another who has cared for this park for many years is George Bathgate, a veteran of World War I as well as a homesteader.

In the summer of 1937 I took a notion to get a small beet contract on a small plot of good ground. This turned out very well as Eva and I did the thinning and weeding ourselves. Archie and I put in a big earth fill across our west forty which made irrigating a lot more satisfactory from that time on. Although the coal trade was now a trickle of former years Archie traded the old truck for a new and larger one, as he had orders for hauling lumber from the Pass in addition to moving furniture and other miscellaneous trucking. True, I was still selling a fair amount of coal, but looked for the trade to decline rather than expand under the prevailing conditions. I was about three miles from the rapidly-improving main roads, and

I could expect Shaughnessy and No. Eight to eat into my trade now that farmers and householders did not have to count their dollars so carefully. So, though I had held my third class mining papers for several years, and was studying for my second class exam, I had in mind to sub-lease my holdings as soon as a suitable chance offered. As overman I had to be on hand to supervise on slack days as well as good days, and this interfered with my taking advantage of well-paid jobs with my teams, such as breaking, harvesting, and hauling rock for ditch repairs. I took over Archie's truck and hauling when he spent a few months that winter in the Okanagan. In fact, I let the mine lie idle while I was elsewhere in the fall of 1938. My sister in Edmonton had lost her baby girl not long before and I spent a week visiting her. I did a job of building on Mrs. Florence Harper's farm and helped her brother, Angus Davy, on his big farm. I also did some stooking on big wheat farms the other side of Barons; all this for the very top wages.

Archie had an order to deliver a pure-bred Angus bull to the Fairfield Horne ranch, and it so happened it was more convenient for me to do it. On invitation my wife and I went back later to be shown over this wide-extending property, the recreation and hobby of J. Fairfield Horne, manager of Campbell, Wilson, and Horne, wholesalers, of Lethbridge. Riverside Ranch was north-west of Lethbridge on the Old Man and Belly Rivers. The junction of the rivers and the site of old Fort Kipp in the grassy curve of the stream added to the beauty and historic interest of the scene. On the site we could find nothing but a few regular patterns of foundation stones, a few raised mounds of darker green, and two or three cellar excavations which had fallen in. The old ranch buildings that had once been the busy "half-way house", were still standing there. This ranch, hardly twenty miles from Lethbridge, and comprising from five to six thousand acres, showed itself in all its solitary beauty as we swept around the curves of its scenic drive. In his spare time Mr. Horne and his family were transforming the woodland acres into a natural park. Under the grand old trees on the river bottom we listened to stories of the long-ago colony from old Kentucky. Around the landscaped ranch buildings an orchard of young fruit trees was being set out. There was wild

hay in abundance; in some places brome, blue grass, blue-joint, crested wheat, and sweet clover were inter-sown to provide pasture and feed for Angus, Percherons, and thoroughbreds.

When King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Canada in the spring of 1939 we drove up to Brooks to see them when the train stopped. Friends and neighbours filled the back of my big truck (of course, I had a permit from the police). We went by way of Turin and Enchant (near here we were pleasantly surprised to see our former ditch-rider, Tommy Helland, busy in his new location on the wide-open spaces of New West). Neither trees nor houses were in our line of vision as we headed for Bow City, while we waved in passing. We arrived in Brooks much before the royal train, and learned that many of the Brooks residents had gone to Bassano, hoping the train would stop there longer. But the streets in Brooks were cool and shady; the C.P.R. Demonstration Farm looked very inviting with lilac and honeysuckle filling the air with perfume. We still had one hour and nineteen minutes to wait according to the policeman in scarlet tunic standing on the platform. There were about six vehicles already in position about halfway between the grain elevators and the depot. Some of the women and children were carrying small flags. Probably around a thousand people, very quiet and good-natured and not crowding, had gathered when the royal train was announced. A few of the older ones were sitting on apple-boxes they had brought along.

The train slowed down momentarily and the rear platform of the royal coach flashed into view. There stood two very young-looking persons. The young man stood slim and graceful, with an earnest, thoughtful face and a kind expression. He was dressed in a tailored grey suit of fine wool. The Queen was a vision of sweetness and loveliness with her radiant smile and apple-blossom complexion. They both stood with a hand upraised in greeting. Very unassuming and quiet, they looked a bit lonely in their solitary state as their train slid from view.

We were all hungry by now, and stopped at Bow City for drinking water, lunch, and soft drinks. The wind rose and the raindrops spattered down; antelope and mallards disported themselves in the wide out-of-doors. We completed our 180-mile round trip as the sun set behind the clouds.

CHAPTER THIRTY

A YEAR OF CHANGES, AND WAR BREAKS OUT

SEVERAL IMPORTANT changes took place in our way of living in 1939. I leased the mine to a competent (so I thought) pick-miner from the Drumheller district. His wife was working as nurse in a hospital at a distance, and he wanted to bach. So I gave him the use of Ruby's house which was unoccupied then. This left me free to take over the whole trucking business when Archie was unexpectedly offered a job as grain-buyer with the Alberta Pacific Grain Company. He had been recommended by our neighbour, Bill Brown, who had been with the company for many years. Archie had bought a small Model A Ford from his uncle in B.C., and had tuned it up into A.1. shape before he drove it back to the prairie. Now he found it very useful in driving back and forth between home and his elevator. He was first assigned to the Tempest elevator under Mr. Penner, but soon transferred to Iron Springs where he continued with the company for many years. We now had a beet acreage on the farm besides hay and grain crops, with the result that when the beet-hauling season came around Archie hired a couple of husky young fellows to do the beet-hauling and shovelling. Archie himself worked on the land with his small tractor in the evenings after he drove home from work. I had gone out of horses when my teams got too old, and had none now except for the mine ponies. Lois, at the age of seventeen, had passed her Grade 12 Senior Matriculation, and had hoped to go to Normal School. However, the Alberta laws did not allow her at that age, and she went helping in the Gibbons home and clerking in their grocery store. She did not give up the idea of going to Normal till the summer of 1939 when she announced her engagement to Bill Porter, of Taber. They were married in

Lethbridge by Rev. Mr. Irwin in late October, and we held the wedding reception dinner in our home at Picture Butte. They made their first home in Taber on a small farm, later moving to Picture Butte and the I. S. Sundial farm (lately purchased from Howard Finley). I was giving my new lessee all the help I could in hauling out coal orders, but he could not seem to make any headway in digging, and he had no ability in handling his finances.

It was just after the New Year in 1930 that I got a wire from my half-brother George saying my father had passed away suddenly at his home in Shelton. I was not too surprised as he had written me not too long before. In the letter he told me that he had been very sick but had rallied due to his wife's wonderful nursing and care. However, he felt that he was not long for this world. Although I had not seen him for so long I felt that I wanted to go to his funeral. The rest of the family backed me up in this desire.

There was still little snow on the ground but the roads between home and Washington State were rough and icy, too great an undertaking for our own car. In the end Maurice Gibbons offered to take me and Archie (Archie having received permission from his Grain Company to take a few days off) down to Shelton in his new powerful Nash. Leaving Picture Butte late in the day and driving in shifts, we managed to get to Kingsgate shortly before the Customs opened the next morning. The roads were exceedingly icy in spots, and once on Moyie Hill the car turned end for end. We stopped in a hotel at Olympia overnight, driving out to Shelton the next morning. There for the first time I met my half-sisters, Bessie and Lillian, my half-brother George, and my step-mother Rose, to whom I took an instant liking. My Aunt Florence Wilson, from Paradise Ranch at Naramata, was already there, and Uncle Matt Wilson. This was the first time I had met them. The next day we all attended the service which was held in the funeral home in Shelton. The family had decided on cremation rather than burial, and George would take the ashes back to the old Warren plot at Falkland, B.C., to place beside his grandparents.

We started back to Alberta the next day, driving continuously. We passed through Spokane at early dawn. It was hard to see

with lights, and hard to see without them. Just outside the city, where there had been recent road and bridge construction, and where a detour sign should have been, we took the wrong fork of the road. We were driving fast, Maurice at the wheel and Archie sleeping in the back seat. I saw the bad place ahead with rocks and posts on a sharp curve on the right side, and below was a sheer drop of about one hundred feet. Maurice, in trying to brake, slid into the guard cable where he came to a sudden stop on the verge of the steep bank. I had braced myself with my hands but got a bad bump on the head when we stopped. Archie in the back seat had hit the door with his head and ear so that the door flew open. He slid out and when he woke he found himself on the hard road looking up at the stars. Maurice escaped untouched. None of us had taken real harm apart from a nasty cut on Archie's ear. But the right front wheel of the car was crumpled, and axle and radiator badly bent. We changed wheels and limped as far as Sand Point where we got into a garage, bought a new wheel, and had the axle straightened out in their cold press. We reached home the same day—a trip of several hundred miles.

With the coming of good weather and roads Eva and I took a little holiday by ourselves. Staying briefly at Waterton Lakes we drove up to pay a short visit to our old neighbours, the Jack Grahams, at Cremona. Jack, always a good farmer and a prosperous one, had decided a few years before that irrigated farming called for more work than he could stand. So he sold out his good farms at Picture Butte and moved to a district that had plenty of natural moisture. There his lands, rolling and hilly with many a valley, yielded grain and hay abundantly. He was very happy showing me his tall waving fields of wheat and oats. While we travelled around to view the countryside we passed a large hip-roofed barn with the name, "W. A. CARTER" painted on the roof. This was the farm home of Wilf Carter, who had already gained great fame on the radio.

Quite early that spring there was much talk of the hangars and airports to be built in various Alberta towns. Macleod was the one I was most interested in, being the nearest and perhaps the first to begin putting up the hangars.

Word went around that there was a keen demand for car-

penters, and with two neighbours I set out to look into the prospects there. We took tent and provisions to last a few days. We found the demand for carpenters had already been filled and a great many more were waiting around. However, we put in our applications and qualifications, and two of us went to work building self-feeders for a farmer close by. Shortly after, when I went to the office of the construction company, I found them looking around for me, as a bad accident had happened to one of their men. They were without a first aid man, and I had listed this ability with them, as I had been required to qualify in a first aid course in order to run my mine. Immediately, in order that I might be available as a first aid man, I was given a carpenter job at good wages. I found this work and the pay very satisfactory and stayed with it while they built the six or seven hangars there. I bought myself a good heavy tent and set up baching about a half-mile from my work. I was on the George Dodds farm, where there was a fine supply of good drinking water bubbling up through a deep gravel bed. Sometimes I caught a ride home over Sunday, and sometimes the folks came for me and took me back again. In this way we met two young airmen whom I shall call "Don" and "Doc", who afterwards visited at our home. We picked them up to give them a ride to their station after they had attended the ceremony at Claresholm where the Duke of Windsor, accompanied by the Duchess, presented wings to the graduates.

By this time the man who had leased the mine from me was more than ready to give up. Not only had he been unable to pay me anything as agreed upon, but he was back with his Government payments in royalties and rentals. There was no point in renewing the 21-year lease which would expire in a short period, so I allowed it to lapse. All surface property was, of course, distinct from this, as it had been purchased separately. We had a good beet contract at this time and Archie had hired help to look after this, he himself with his tractor doing the machine work on the land in his spare time. Many a night he would work till midnight, and Eva would sit up to listen that no accident befell in the dark. And until he came in for the night.

Later in the fall, through an offer of Eva's cousin, who was

construction superintendent at Trail, I got a job at the new Warfield site where cement foundations for transformers were being put in. For housekeeping I rented rooms from an Italian living up the " Gulch ". Very primitive quarters, but when my wife came up for Christmas she transformed them considerably with a few yards of bright cretonne. The Trail job ran out about the middle of March and I was back to the prairie in time to see Eva off on a trip to Prince Edward Island, where she had been called by the sudden illness of her father. The unexpected wire caused hurried preparations, and a flat tire on the Lethbridge hill gave her only seconds to catch her train. From Montreal east she took the plane. She remained east till fall.

Archie was still coming home every night. Eileen was a big girl in top grades of high school, and Lois was near (her husband working at Sundal's farm). So I felt free to go back to construction work. I worked for Bennett and White in Claresholm till that job was finished, then took a similar hangar job in Lethbridge. During the spring I entered Lethbridge hospital for a hernia operation. I had been suffering from this trouble for several years, and expected the operation would not be a serious one. However, an unfortunate incident occurred shortly after the operation and I was very weak and poorly for a considerable time. I had been home convalescing only a few days when Maurice Gibbons, Bill and Lois Porter and their baby girl, Donna, went on a short holiday trip to B.C. They thought I was well enough to go along with them. We had a good trip through central B.C., visiting relatives at Naramata, Vernon, and Kelowna, and coming back by the Big Bend highway, a wild and rocky road. On my return my Lethbridge employers were anxious I should work for them till their job was finished. I then went to De Winton, where I did the same work for Bennett and White. At the last I worked as cement foreman in laying large floors for their hangars. When it got too cold, work on the hangars ceased. I came home to find that Bill Porter wanted to go working with me and had heard of an opening at Kirkaldy Airport, near Vulcan. My wife had returned from the East while I was at De Winton. It was when we were working near Vulcan that our two families came up to spend

Christmas Day with us, bringing along with them the Christmas turkey and other holiday eats, as we had a small house where we were baching. Shortly after that I suffered a painful accident at the work on the airport which resulted in two sprained ankles and laid me up in hospital for about ten days. After that I came home to convalesce. When the work at Kirkaldy was finished we went to work at Currie Barracks, where they were constructing quarters for the women's division of the services. There were a lot of workmen looking for living quarters and the best we could get was a room over a stable on the outskirts of the city. I think it was in May of 1942 that we finished the job we had there. I came home and found myself busy helping Archie on the farm. Archie was particularly busy that spring as he planned on being married the first of July, and had a lot of work to do on redecorating the company house at Iron Springs. While he was single he had been living at home, and the principal of the school, Donald Baldwin, with his wife and family, had rented the company dwelling. Now Archie and Margaret would be moving in as soon as their honeymoon was over. Archie had a man and his wife hired to look after the beet hand-work, but apart from that had done a lot of the farm work himself. Now with his car to overhaul for the honeymoon trip, his house to redecorate, and his tractor work on the farm, I was soon busy at a dozen tasks to help him out. Eileen was planning on going to business college in Edmonton now that she had finished her Grade 12, and was helping her mother with an extensive repapering and redecorating job of all the rooms in our own house before she should go away. Bill Porter had gone to Wetaskiwin. Lois planned to join him as soon as they could get living quarters.

Even before this time Government officials at Edmonton had been making plans to organise a huge community pasture near Vauxhall, as they had found themselves in possession of seven townships and a half, approximately, of virgin grasslands. This had come to them through unpaid taxes and cancelled grazing leases. Because of my experience in handling cattle, along with my knowledge of the Southern Alberta rangeland with which I had been familiar since my youthful days on the round-up, my name was mentioned as one who might be qualified to supervise

such an enterprise when it was established. In order that I might get some training in the immediate handling of stock in community pastures, I was notified to be ready to leave for Edmonton at a moment's notice. After Archie's marriage I found time to do some building on the Gibbons farm and some tractor farming on our own place, before I was notified to take train for Edmonton, bringing along saddle and other equipment for riding, as well as a bed. When I got there I found my new job would take me to North Cooking Lake. As it was September I soon found myself busy helping in the round-up and dispersal of something like sixteen or seventeen hundred head of cattle and perhaps two hundred horses. It was different from any range I had been used to, being all bush pasture. For living quarters I had a small riders' cabin, about two miles from the headquarters buildings. We had about four extra helpers, some white and some Indian, for the round-up; and in spite of a lot of rainy chilling weather we got most of the animals sorted out and distributed to their owners. In my spare time over Sunday or on week-ends I was able to go thirty miles into Edmonton to see my sister's family and my daughter.

We had slack time in November and the department thought it was a good time for their inspector, Art Paul, and me to go down to the Vauxhall country and look over the prospects there, particularly with a view to setting up a pasture to accommodate the stock belonging to farmers and ranchers living on irrigated lands. We found it bad weather when we got down there—snowy and cold. We spent about a week there before going back. Art Paul had car trouble, so went back by train. I went over to Picture Butte for a few days, then also went back by train. While Eva was alone in the house Archie used to be over often to see about outside chores, and she spent much of her time at Iron Springs with them.

Eileen was home for her Christmas holidays and as soon as she went back to Edmonton Eva went by train to Vernon, B.C., to visit Lois and Bill, as well as a brother and a sister living in the valley. When Bill had finished at Wetaskiwin he had been sent to Vernon.

By February the Department of Mines and Forests at Edmonton had decided on one large pasture, containing around

seven and one-half townships, for Vauxhall. On February 22nd, V. A. Wood, Director of Lands, A. E. Kynnersley and myself arrived in Vauxhall, and that same afternoon had a meeting with some of the farmers. At 2 p.m. the next day Mr. Wood addressed a meeting of the farmers and ranchers, explaining what it was all about and introducing me as caretaker of the new pasture. Mr. Maurice, of Lethbridge, came out to meet me, and our first responsibility was to look for a house that would be suitable to move on headquarters' site which was just east across the road from the small hamlet of Vauxhall. We looked at the Jim Rose house at Grantham, and at Mrs. Tom Hart's farmhouse in New West, also the Stewart house in Vauxhall. We drove over to Lomond and Travers to look over unoccupied buildings that had gone back to the Government for taxes. Later we made a trip to Retlaw for the same purpose, then got stuck four miles from Bow City. Not only stuck, but lost! And we walked four miles to Ed Witting's before we found ourselves a place to stay. The next morning Ed Oliver, who was mining at Bow City, pulled our car to the top of the hill. I had been furnished with a Ford coupé by the Department, and now took Mr. Maurice to Calgary by way of Lomond. It was a very wintry spell, mercury at thirty-two below. I came back to Lethbridge and spent the week-end at Archie's at Iron Springs. I carefully looked over my own harness outfits around the home stables, also kept my eyes open for any neighbourhood sales where I might get halters and bridles.

My instructions had been to look for a suitable house for moving; one that could be obtained for less than it would cost to build a new one. Mrs. Hart's house sounded like the best bet, and soon Mr. Wood and Mr. Kynnersley came down to see her about its purchase. They also made arrangements about cement, digging a basement, and moving the house. I was busy looking around for saddle-ponies at Olson's and elsewhere, but found them too high-priced to handle. I had brought over my own work tools from Picture Butte and Iron Springs.

Mr. Kynnersley was down to help me off and on for quite a while. During the last week of March we tore down the Purcell building that had been a hardware store, and before that the Rosemead dance hall. Just after that I worked on

surveying the basement for the house, and attended a sale at Charlie Furman's where I found myself in the market for buying a fence, as there was an immense amount of fencing to be done on the new pasture. Art Paul came down to look into the matter with me. March was almost over and Bill Kramer, who with his teams had been hired to dig the cellar, started to work the first of April. We used a wheel scraper for our work, and on bad days we worked on digging our cisterns. It had been decided we should have one for good drinking water, and another for wash water. Bill Kramer, probably because I had been appointed by the Social Credit Government, always referred to me as "Aberhart", which was quite amusing to all concerned. After we had been working on cellar and cisterns for ten days or more Kynnersley came in and we went to Travers to make arrangements to get the lumber hauled down. Duhamel hauled it down the next week, after we had spent several days getting it pulled down and piled. Kynnersley also spent considerable time checking on the boundary lines and fences of the pasture.

There was a great amount of old lumber to be hauled, and it was brought in on two-ton trucks. It served to build the large combined barn and stable, double garage, and store-room, all under the same roof, as well as other outbuildings, and also a certain amount of re-modelling needed about the dwelling-house. When the basement and cisterns were completed, Hjalmar Johnson, a neighbouring farmer who was also a carpenter and a cement man, put in the cement foundations and lined the cisterns.

Carl Johnson, of Enchant, moved the house with his house-moving equipment. Kynnersley had been helping me in the running of the cement. We had a mixer from Taber. I made arrangements with Sauter about windows, and with John Young for my hauling. The question of building a new chimney came up as soon as the house had been moved, as well as a lot of carpenter work in building a back porch, etc. All this took well up to the end of April. But before that time I had to take a few days off to gather up saddle-horses and equipment, and look over the pasture. I had hired Cornie Schirling, of the Vauxhall district, as rider, and we were fairly late beginning to take

in cattle. From local farmers and ranchers we took in from six to seven hundred head, but horses were very plentiful. The Furman horses alone numbered in the hundreds. There were a great many sheep in the Walmark and Green outfit; and the MacPherson's, the two MacKenzie outfits, and Mrs. Hart's, all added up to an impressive total.

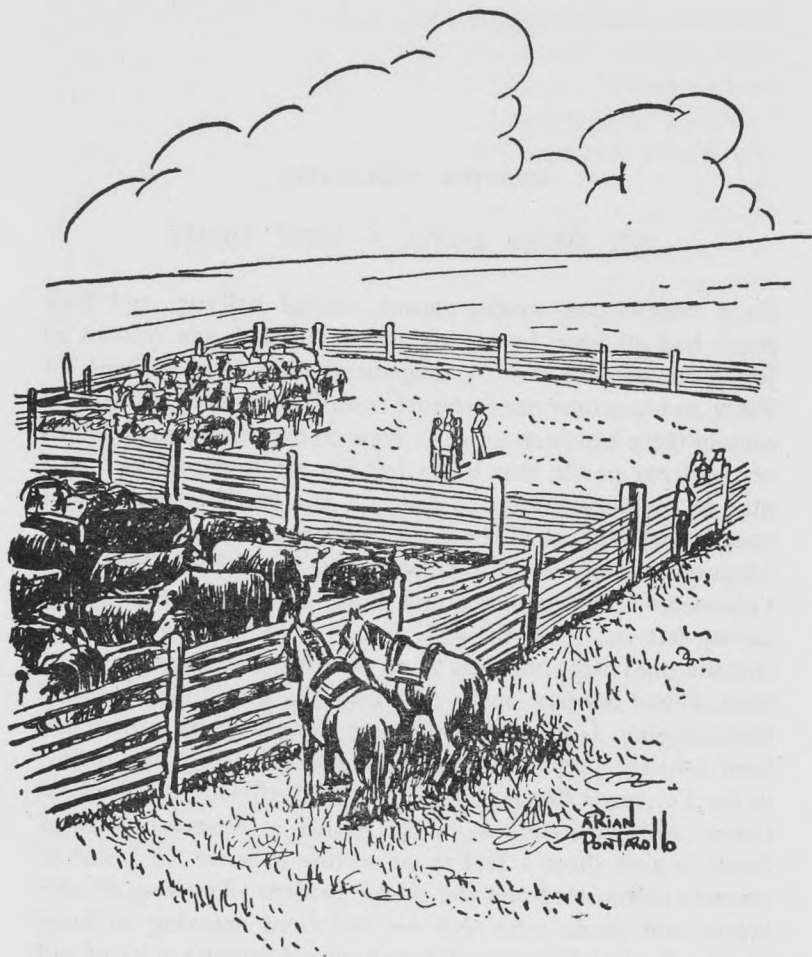
I wasted no time in getting work on the barn and garages started, with footings put in and foundations laid. And on the pasture I put men to fencing. Ernie Dickie, George Brady, Clarence Tyner, and Jim Pollitt were among the men I had hired to work on the fences from time to time. Johnson was carpenter for my house and other buildings, and Carman Morse took on a pretty big job of painting inside and out. Kynnersley was down a lot to look things over, and I did a lot of riding and checking on the stock myself.

All this time I had been rooming at the Corona Hotel, and taing meals at the Koffee Kup, then under the management of Mrs. Hilda Brady. When Eva came back from Vernon early in April I brought her over to look at the site of our future home, and she was very pleased with it. It was not yet ready for us to move in—in fact, the basement had not been finished then, so she went back to Picture Butte and put in a good big garden (with the help of the young folks) as we wanted a winter's supply of vegetables. I had put in a patch of potatoes in Vauxhall. It was July 26th before the house was fit for us to move into, although the upstairs rooms had not been done yet.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

WE MOVE INTO A NEW HOME

FOUR DOWNSTAIR rooms, pantry, central hallway, and back porch had all been freshly painted in light cheery colours by July 24th when I made arrangements with Eric Wilkins, of Taber, to bring over my furniture from Picture Butte. By mutual consent there had been no work done on the three upstairs rooms or the front porch, that being left for me to fix up as I had time in the slack season of fall and winter. The house faced west towards the small town, and as it was a new location for a house there were no shade trees on the half-section. However, I planned on putting in trees and flower gardens the next spring, having left, as I then thought, ample room between the house and the big irrigation ditch along the road for several rows of trees, flower borders, and a driveway. On July 26th we set up housekeeping. Lois and Donna were along with us as they had been staying at Picture Butte with Eva after Bill was posted to the Engineers Corps stationed at the Lethbridge Internment Camp. Although anxious to get settled in Vauxhall without delay, it gave them a feeling of sorrow to leave the home so recently redecorated and the flower gardens, flowering shrubs, lawns, and shade trees that we had been enjoying so long. During the last few years I found myself missing a lot of old friends and neighbours when I came back for a few days' stay. Sam Brady had passed away many years before; now it was the turn of such old-timers as Arthur Jones, Martin Gray, Charlie Green, John Beiswanger, and John Rosen. And there were many others. When we moved to Vauxhall I left what equipment was still around in the care of the family that worked our beet contract that summer. The man and his wife were most reliable and lived in Ruby's three-room house. Their children were all married and they were very happy to see us from time to time



when we came over to get potatoes or vegetables from our garden, or just to look around at the old place.

As I had no corrals that first summer we used the J. B. Ross corrals. But after other buildings had been finished I had Johnson and Morse build two portable cabins, something in the style of sheep-wagons. These proved of great use to us. Later in the summer, when I moved a lot of the stuff from the north side of the pasture near the Bow to the south side for the sake of better grass, I had to do a great deal of riding. Often I was in

the saddle after dark. In September a lot of fencing had to be done. I hired a lot of local men from the Grantham district in order to get as much as possible done before the fall round-up.

Not all the people in Vauxhall district were strangers to me. There was Jack Hemsley, whom I had known since I was a baby; Earl Warren, who worked for Billy Hill when I was a boy; Tommy Helland, of New West, who had been our ditch-rider in Picture Butte; George Brady, who had moved from the Cameron; Joe Head, who had lived at Picture Butte; and the Cliff Reynolds family in Enchant, as well as Kaspar Green's. I found meeting my new neighbours a pleasant duty. Some that I met in the first few weeks were Charles Sauter, Alvie and Wes Martin, Colin Dewhurst, Art Ross, "Hildy" of the Clarindale Stock Farm, J. B. Ross, Claes Birck, Tage Birck, Van Wyck, who was C.P.R. depot agent, Guido Benetti, Jack Reid, Walter McAndrews, John Young, Oscar Westlind, Walter Snaith, Elmer Mickelberry, Albert Green, Alec Walmark, Charlie Furman (whom I had known years before), and others I could mention.

There was no church building in Vauxhall. Rev. Harvey Johnston, of the United Church, with headquarters at Retlaw, held preaching services in the Vauxhall school. The Anglican minister from Taber used to hold services in the homes of their members from time to time. There was a union Sunday School with C. R. Sauter as superintendent. Although small, the town boasted a resident District Nurse most of the time.

Early in October J. Harvie, V. A. Wood and Mr. Rankin made a trip from Edmonton to look over the set-up of the new community pasture. They appeared to be satisfied with its progress. My crew were still busy putting in fences, and this work continued till freeze-up. I had my hands full locating strays until Christmas. But when the cold weather of autumn came I had to take time off to install a new furnace in the basement, the old one that came with the house being burnt out. I got Joseph Enright, of Retlaw, to help me and direct the job, and it took us about three days, during which we were mighty cold with only the kitchen range to heat the house.

After the New Year I worked on coal and fruit bins in the basement. I finished plastering, lining, and painting the two

bedrooms upstairs which, though used by various families through the years, had never been finished. They were good-sized rooms, as was the upstairs hall-room, and this work took us a good many short winter days, my wife helping me. I think it was around the middle of January when Kynnersley came down to see about wells for the pasture, as water in short supply had been one of the difficulties away from river or slough.

I was somewhat startled one fine evening in early October when I was suddenly called on to accompany Fred Sauter to Taber or Lethbridge with the remains of one of my new acquaintances, Henry Key, who had just passed away from a heart attack. I do not know why I was chosen, unless someone remembered I was a first aid man. There was no doctor around. We were both glad when we had discharged this gruesome errand.

We had new fishing grounds to get acquainted with. We went to Lake Newell sometimes, and when the water was shut off in the fall there were thousands of white fish to be had for the taking before they should perish. Like other householders I caught more than I knew what to do with, so we ate and canned till we were tired of the sight of them, besides giving away all we could. There was a story that some farmers came with trucks and pitchforks, hauling away loads of fish to throw on their land as fertiliser.

I have already referred to the visit of the Deputy-Minister of the Department and the Director of Lands in October when they approved the buildings that had been put up, their appearance, and the site chosen. They helped me map out a course of action for the next year, while Kynnersley gave advice on dividing the pasture and changing fences when down later.

As the Ford coupé was of little use once I began to travel the rough trails of the pasture, I had been furnished with an old station wagon with which I could transport men, tools, posts, wire, and other supplies. At the end of the year it was ready for retirement, and the Department provided me with a new small International truck. I had intended to take a very brief holiday to attend Maurice Gibbons' wedding at Picture Butte, but pasture business prevented. By February, 1944, problems

centring around a water supply predominated. Nels Malm, Walter McAndrews and I set out to make a thorough investigation of water prospects. Harvie and Wood came down to see what could be done about wells. In the meantime various oil companies had been drilling here and there. In many cases they struck water, but they had capped their wells. We tried some of the old drillings for water but found we could not get any worthwhile supply. Then the P.F.R.A. put in some dugouts that were very useful, but still did not solve our most pressing needs. Mr. Wood and Mr. Paul called me to Edmonton for a couple of days to see if we could not work out some solution. It was finally decided to put in a good well at Duck Lake. A big tank of solid cement was installed, with a wind-mill for power. And we were all well pleased with the results.

Another task that gave me a lot of work and worry was the question of stray horses. While a certain number of horses were put in legally for winter pasture, a far greater number either stayed in or were pushed in under cover of darkness by their owners. Roaming there for weeks and months, it was quite a task to keep them off the summer grass. In the end practically all horses were refused pasturage in order to leave the feed for other stock of more value. We needed to build our own corrals that spring. We had used the Ross corrals at first, and later the Furman corrals for the cattle sent across the south river. We had forded the cattle across, which was a very hard thing to do. Probably we could not have done it at all if it had not been for one old cow that we could lead across, at the head of each bunch we forded, taking her back on the ferry. Charles Furman, Senior, gave us some help with the first ones we took over on the ferry. (He was taking out fence close to the river). We took across over two hundred head from Bow Island that day. We were now taking in many more cattle than at first, and were tagging them with numbers sent by the Department. One of the first corrals I built was a small one a short distance south of headquarters. It did very well for cattle that came in by road and from Taber. Soon we built really big corrals close to the drainage lake north-west of Grantham. But when a lot more water had been drained into the lake I had to move the corrals

over close to the highway, and there I had my "holding pasture" for several years.

Around the headquarters there was a lot of work to be done too. Post-holes had to be dug for the surrounding and cross fences, posts set up, wire stretched, and a plank bridge put across the big irrigation ditch between us and the town. I certainly had no idle moments. One day when I was working around the grounds Tom Nolan, who was now getting quite frail, stopped long enough to pay me a visit. It had been a long time since I had last talked to him.

As a rule we enjoyed attending the Saturday night movie which was held in the Community Hall. We were usually late getting home, somewhere near midnight. I had just dropped into bed and off to sleep when Eva heard someone drive up to the door. She slipped on a gown and went to the door. A small truck was standing there. One of the Allen boys and one of the Camerons asked if I would come to the door. Then they asked me to come out and look at the sheep-herder in the back of the truck. They thought he was dead, as he had fallen back on his cot while talking at supper-time. He was working for Camerons, and they knew I was a first aid man. The man was dead all right, and we took him down to the district nurse's office. My only holiday that summer was my birthday week-end at Corbin, B.C., where we went fishing but caught no fish.

Our vegetables and potatoes were good that summer, and we were lucky in buying a lot of small fruit from our neighbours; raspberries from Pfaffs, plums and cherries from the Johnsons.

We were far from the busy lanes of traffic but I never found my new surroundings monotonous or lonely. The range where I spent most of my waking hours was majestic in its scenery and extent. Bounded by the currents of two great rivers, I could ride from west to east or from north to south for almost twenty-five miles without seeing any human habitation other than a rider's cabin or a sheep-herder's wagon. There were rough and rocky hilltops where one could survey the pasture for many miles; there were wide valleys and far-extending slopes sometimes knee-high with prairie grasses. Wild ducks and waterfowl circled over many a natural slough, and prettiest of the wild life was the graceful skimming of a band of antelope over

the hillside where they seemed to float out of human sight. I always took my lunch as my work was usually far from the headquarters, and sometimes Eva went with me for the day if she was free of other duties. We will always remember a hot summer day we stopped at the Spring Camp for lunch. When we got out of the truck I walked down to a pond with a view to getting some water while Eva walked over to a small box-like wooden structure that she thought might be a well-box. Coiled up on the warm sand close to the corner was a large rattlesnake that was lying perfectly still. From her first distance of some six feet she stepped back hastily, and this time got a view of the second side of the box where another snake just as large was carelessly sprawled over the ground. By this time she was ready to go back to the truck. Then she began to hunt around for a long, light pole I might find useful in killing the snakes when I got back. However, I decided the best thing I could use was a long-handled shovel I had in the back of the truck. By that time one of the snakes had disappeared, and I killed the other. I opened the door to find it was the entrance to an old root cellar, and there seemed to be quite a number of snakes in there on the ground and the old rotten steps. I closed the door again and left them in peace. But we rarely saw snakes around our house east of town, although it was fairly common to hear of one in the neighbourhood.

I had spent my boyhood in the little town of Lethbridge where time rolled by and seemed to bring little change during the closing years of the last century. I had pioneered over the years of my young manhood in the Iron Springs and Picture Butte district, seeing it change from virgin prairie to comfortable homes. And ever its motto and watchword had been: "Hard work, economy—'Necessity is the mother of invention'." I had lived through the hectic activity of the war period when mountains of material and toiling armies of men brought forth finished airports in a matter of months. And now in Vauxhall district I was reminded of a husky growing lad just now realising his strength and latent abilities, and stretching out in every direction to realise them. It was already a district of well-defined projects and well-equipped leaders. Agricultural matters were perhaps the most prominent, with the Vaux-

hall Co-op. Association at the top of the list. The names of A. Hildenbrand, of the Clarindale Stock Farms, and Nels Malm will always be remembered for their close association with this outstanding organisation, as will the latter for his position with the Alberta Wheat Pool over the years. While "Hildy's" achievements in raising pure-bred sheep, and in helping the high school boys towards the winning of seed grain trophies will always be green in the history of Vauxhall. Then the name of Colin Dewhurst is almost synonymous with the history of the Vauxhall District Nursing Association and the establishment of the Nurses' Home. Jim Stewart had made it his duty and pleasure to beautify the school grounds with flowers and borders, while Ernie King, head of the Canada Land and Irrigation Company, had a well-shaded camp north of the town and handled the administration of irrigation for all the district. Claes Birck had a private electric light plant from which he supplied the town, and he also showed movie films in the Community Hall. This hall had been built through the contributions and efforts of old-timers both in town and country. The curling rink was a very active spot at a time when curling had not become such a country-wide pastime, and baseball had for years been spelled with a capital letter, with good players from Retlaw and Enchant taking part.

"Scotty" Campbell, a grass expert from the Department at Edmonton, was a frequent visitor, making out grazing reports and giving me some good hints on grazing procedure. We soon became good friends, as well as being acquainted in an official capacity. Barney Crockett, of Medicine Hat, was another visitor I had for a couple of days while he was looking around for stock that had been stolen. Charlie MacLean called from time to time, and I found him a great help in helping me get rid of some of the unwanted horses on the range. Many small ranchers wanted to put their increasing herds in the pasture, away from their irrigated crops during the growing season, and I was quite pleased to see a large number of the sheep moved away to Saskatchewan. Walmark, in charge of the Walmark and Green flocks, moved them to Piapot where he acquired part of the old 76 holdings. It was an excellent move for all concerned. Other ranchers around and beside the pasture were

Raymond Clark, Albert Torrie, Alfred Miller, the Jensens, and the Litchfields. Neighbouring boys who worked for me as riders from time to time were Melvin Litchfield, Lloyd Jensen, Mel Hoel, and Ken Robertson. Every year more cattle were coming in from outside—from such points as Burdett, Bow Island, Taber, Turin, Retlaw, Iron Springs, and Barnwell. Most of the resident ranchers were very willing to give any extra needed help at round-up time. I might mention the Feldbusch brothers, the Johnsons, W. McAndrews, Mickelberrys, Charlie Furman, and there must have been others. Charlie's aged father on his old white horse, "Ghost", could always be seen until his health failed. He lived in a sort of dugout dwelling on the Bow River, at a spot he called Long Beach, probably in memory of his old California home. He had seen many years as a rancher and nothing made him happier than to be given a job of helping at a round-up.

Later in the fall, during a spell of stormy weather, the Department sent a crew of men to work on the abandoned drilling sites of the oil companies. They must have encountered difficulties as they were not able to report any favourable results.

At home the summer passed with occasional visits from members of the family. In September Eva and I attended the diamond wedding reception for Mr. and Mrs. T. P. (Tom) Nolan in Iron Springs Hall. It was a very happy occasion for these old-timers, with their many grandchildren cooking and serving the banquet. But the passing of three good friends that fall caused us more than casual regret. They were old Mrs. Harvie (Robert), Mrs. Bessie Wyman, and Jules Reck. Mac Fleming, who had been working for some time at the Johnson sawmill at Macleod, called quite unexpectedly to visit us one day. We were all very glad to see him once more, and to know he was well and busy. He had always retained a great attachment for the children, particularly for Lois.

One fine Sunday afternoon early in December my wife and I had enjoyed a skate on the big drainage lake by the corrals, and came home in high spirits. Shortly afterwards a wire came to tell us that Eva's father had passed away that night at his home in P.E.I. He had lived to a good old age, ninety-three years and four months, without having had more than one serious

illness. As other members of the family planned on going East for the funeral, she did not go at that time.

In the winter Archie found a good buyer for our farm at Picture Butte, and we sold out. It seemed strange not to have an acre of land to call our own, so I began looking around Vauxhall for a small place that might suit me, at a price not too high. While we had not given much thought to any course but renting, I was better satisfied that Archie was not making that long trip with his tractor night after night. Now with his share of the proceeds he had a chance to buy an irrigated quarter close to his home, and he wanted me to go in with him. This I did, instead of buying a piece by myself at Vauxhall. In spring we went over to the old house and brought back a lot of odds and ends we had left there. I also sold the new linoleums we had put on the floors, as no one had lived in the house since we left it. The buyer lived in Picture Butte town, and was going to put a renter in the house.

Summer brought my usual round of caretaker and inspection duties on the Lease, as the pasture was commonly called; fences, water, salt, grass, and watching that none of the herds should stray or be injured. We began spraying for warble flies and vaccinating against blackleg. Some more work was needed on wells, and I moved two cabins on the vacated Walmark site. In the district some changes took place on the big farms. Bartletts and Brumwells moved away, with Johnsons and Broders coming in. Later Leith Johnson and Wilcox brought in stock. Dave Jenkins had a big sheep herd. Albert McAndrews passed away very suddenly in the winter.

During the winter we painted over the various rooms of the house. Eileen came home in the spring and took a job clerking in Blaney's store. She was on hand to keep house for me while her mother was away for a couple of weeks in Saskatchewan and Calgary. In October she was married to Steve Forchuk, a Vauxhall boy who had served in the R.C.A.F. overseas during World War II. They were married at home in a candlelight ceremony by the Rev. L. Fosmark.

In December Eva's mother had a sale of her effects and came west after visiting some of the family in Marblehead and Philadelphia. On her way to Calgary by train from Toronto she

contracted a very serious case of flu which sent her to hospital for about a month. My wife's sister was living in Calgary, and her mother stayed with her until April when she came to Vauxhall by train. Her mother had always thought of the prairies as being so dry, and it was a real eye-opener for her to see houses surrounded by water and row-boats beside them. "This is a country of lakes!" she said. (It was the very wet spring of 1947). In August she went to B.C., coming back for the winter in late October. It was a good growing summer with a considerable amount of hail. In August I got a few days off to go to the mountains. Steve and Eileen, Eva and I, comprised the party and we went by the Banff-Windermere highway. I improved the front of the house about this time by glassing in the open veranda, my wife very much approving of the change; so much dust kept out and so much heat kept in!

So far I have not mentioned the baby antelope which one of my men picked up on the range. I got police permission to keep it, and it was a real pet for over a year. But in spite of all the attention we gave it (perhaps it was too much?) it did not thrive over the winter, and after being scared and chased into a wire fence, it did not survive for long.

During these years I reached a peak in taking cattle on the Reserve, somewhere near four thousand. I had a short holiday with Eva, Lois, and her children to Cypress Park in August. Before that, in July, we had visits from relatives in Kelowna and Vernon. Steve had now rejoined the R.C.A.F. after trying irrigated farming for one year. He did not like it. Lois and Bill were permanently settled in Lethbridge and had bought a nice big lot to build on in North Lethbridge. We were delighted to see Mr. and Mrs. Henry Oliver back from Ontario for a visit during the summer. Steve spent his first summer after re-entry into the R.C.A.F. at Edmonton and Camp Borden. Two very good friends that left us were Margaret's mother, Mrs. Jessie Annable, and Bert Wyman. They were two we really missed greatly.

By 1950 there were great changes in the set-up of the Vauxhall district. The Federal Government, through Hon. J. G. Gardiner, had bought out the C.L. & I. Co. Mark Mann was the new administrator, and a great many new officials and

workers came in, employed by the P.F.R.A., which was now planning a huge construction programme. Probably the first visible results came in connection with the community pasture. A few years before I had been visited by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, who was surveying some choice blocks for returned soldiers. Soon I found out that numberless acres of choice land, suitable for irrigation, now under the control of the Provincial Government, would be redeemed and put under the ditch, thus creating the new settlement of Hays. A vast amount of survey work was undertaken, preparations were made for building a huge dam (now known as No. 1 reservoir or Scope Lake), cement footings for the old wooden flume were torn out, and a huge flume nearly a mile long was built across Expanse Coulee. In all, probably about two-thirds of the pasture was withdrawn from grazing. However, enough pasture had been left to meet the needs of the residents of the immediate area. The directors of the Grazing Association now began to cut down on the number of animals taken in from outside points, and cattlemen such as Leith and Bill Johnson, Allan Wilcox, and Lynn Bullock began to look around for individual leases elsewhere.

One of my hardest tasks had always been to hold my stock within the boundaries of such a large lease, and it was particularly hard to locate the strays in the late fall at round-up time. With so many hills, valleys, river banks, and coulees, I found nothing could take the place of a survey by aeroplane. I had never had any experience in flying a plane. In fact, my only acquaintance with planes or fliers dated back to the time Charlie Tweed had a plane stationed near the Noble home in Nobleford, and when Ernie Boffa used to take up passengers at picnics around Park Lake. After Archie bought a Piper Cub and became a skilful flier he often came over and took me for a survey of the stock on the Reserve. Now that the truckers on the construction work were working all over the pasture I never knew when gates or fences might be down. In that case I needed the air survey more than ever. One great benefit I received from the construction workers was in the way of roads, for they "bulldozed" out many a crooked, bumpy trail into a smooth, straight road.

We had two prairie fires on the Reserve while I was there, one in April and one in October, when the prairie grass was as dry as tinder. One of them was fairly extensive and we had a lot of volunteer fire-fighters from town and country including Constable Gordon Hacking. The wind was pretty high when I first sighted the blaze from the corrals where we were working. We, George Brady and myself, went to the scene of the fire with a barrel of water, sacks, and shovels, but found it too much for us to handle with our own crew. Constable Hacking came along and gave the general alarm in town; while George and I back-fired using coal-oil, he organised the fire-fighters who arrived. Charlie Martin brought tractor and plough, and all helped. It took two hours or more to put out what was a real dangerous fire threatening the Allen buildings and the open prairie beyond. There must have been four or five sections burned over before it was finally extinguished.

Vauxhall had been incorporated as a village in 1950 when it had a population of around six hundred people. Wesley Martin was chosen mayor for the first term, and with the impetus given construction and improvements by the presence of P.F.R.A. headquarters, the building of modern homes, additional business houses, and opening up cross streets was speeded up. Some of the citizens who passed away in the early years after World War II were Charles Furman, Senior; Mr. Dalton and Mr. Young (both over ninety); Bill MacKenzie, a prominent sheepman, who died suddenly; Jack Noble, Senior, of Turin; and Jack Hemsley. Clyde Britten met a sudden death through being electrocuted while at work, and John Young suffered a severe accident in the same way. Morley Dickout and Chester MacDonald, of Iron Springs, were personal friends who passed away.

On a fine September day, while I was taking Eileen and her little daughter to Lethbridge, on their way to join Steve at Fort Nelson, we got a radio flash to say that our old home at Picture Butte had been burned to the ground that morning. We drove down to see it while on our way to town. Sure enough, on that fine calm morning it had gone up in smoke, leaving only a part of the lower front side where green creepers covered the shingles. The man who had rented it was outside with all

his family when it happened, and no one was hurt. However, the circumstances were so suspicious that a trial resulted and he was later sent to jail for a couple of years. We were sorry to see it burned, for sentimental reasons, though we had no further financial interest in the place at that time.

In Vauxhall there was a revival of interest in square dancing in the fall of 1950, and practice classes were held in the Community Hall for several months with a good attendance. However, when many novelty turns and steps were brought into the old-time figures, a large number of dancers lost interest.

November 22nd, 1950, was one of the red letter days of my life. I had received a special invitation from Mr. G. C. Paterson, representing the Lethbridge Public School Board, to attend the official opening of the Lethbridge Collegiate Institute on that day. This was in memory of the fact that my mother, then Miss Edith Emma Coe, had been the first school teacher in Lethbridge at a time just prior to its organisation as a school district. The invitation included my wife, my son and his son, and seats had been reserved for us on the platform. As my grandson was too young to take his place there, two small granddaughters substituted and greatly enjoyed the programme. (Perhaps even more they enjoyed the taped recording that was re-broadcast that same evening). I found the whole programme most interesting, but most of all I enjoyed meeting again after many years the chief speaker for the event, Dr. W. E. Frame, with whom I had gone to school. Dr. Frame was then Chief Superintendent for Alberta Schools, and was introduced to the audience by the late Senator Buchanan.

In February of 1951 I took a few days off to attend the Western Stockgrowers' Convention, and found it a good place to meet many who were interested in my line of work. A short time later I had the pleasure of entering a square dance set of eight in the International Square Dance Festival at Lethbridge. They were from Vauxhall, and I had been coaching them more or less over the winter. I acted as caller for them.

I was surprised, sometime during July, to get a phone message from Moose Jaw from my brother George's wife, advising that they would make a flying visit to us on their way home to Olympia from Chicago. During the summer Steve,

Eileen and Cindy flew down from Fort Nelson and paid us a short visit. Late in September, when a wire came from Fort Nelson announcing the birth of a son, Eva and Lois went up for a few weeks. They took bus to Dawson Creek, and Steve met them there, driving the remaining three hundred miles by car. I could not be away from my work at that time so took the C.P.A. from Edmonton in January when I could spare the time. My wife had also taken C.P.A. on her return trip in November.

As I had been appointed one of the committee to look into the matter of buying or building an edifice that would be suitable for a United Church building, I had plenty of calls on my spare time. Wes Martin and I looked into the matter of purchasing or moving over the church at Retlaw, but we soon discovered that its registration prevented it from being bought or sold legally. The work of building a new church then began, and much volunteer labour was given by members and adherents. One afternoon, while busy there, an old-time friend, Ted Ingram, of Victoria, B.C., dropped in to visit me. One of the most prominent of Sundial old-timers, he took much pleasure in visiting old scenes and meeting old friends after so many years absence.

In the spring of 1952 I bought a new car, a "Henry J." There had not been many of them brought to Lethbridge, and I made a satisfactory deal in trading in my Ford for it. In April I got Mel Hoel to work on the Reserve in preparation for taking in cattle. For my own part I had a great deal of spraying to do for warble-flies among the cattle of the district to be taken in later. Eva's mother arrived to visit us in July; she had been spending part of each year with us and part with Alice in Calgary. In July the Department of Lands and Forests supplied me with a new truck. Miss Winnifred Davis arrived as lay preacher for the newly-organised church, and was very active in getting it completed at an early date. Whether from working on the upper part of the inside of the building, from the strain of handling sprayers, or from the neck injury I got in 1934, I suffered severely from a stiff and painful neck that summer and took treatment from Dr. Irving, of Lethbridge.

During 1952 negotiations between the Vauxhall Grazing Association and the Department of Lands in Edmonton resulted

in the former taking over the full management of the community pasture the next spring, and the latter taking full charge of handling all the individual leases. As the Association would be hiring all their own employees the department appointed me to supervise what was done, to look after individual leases, and to supervise the riders in a similar pasture at Twin River, near the border.

The chief difficulty on the Twin River, or Del Bonita, pasture seemed to be the matter of getting water. I went down there in April, and again for a while in May. I had been doing my best to see their new rider became acquainted with his duties and to make plans for more water through the heat of the summer ahead. I was fortunate in getting the interest and help of Jack Ragan in the effort to obtain water. He used his influence to the extent that a big dam was built there, and I have been told that it is still a satisfactory water-hole for that pasture. I went back again in July to look over the situation before my retirement date should come up in August.

During the winter before, the church roof had been raised and the opening service was held in March, 1953, with several prominent clergymen on hand. Rev. Mr. Elliott, Rev. J. Sorochan, and Rev. G. Young were among those. The town now had four churches: the Evangelical Free had opened theirs several months before; the Anglican church was going up on a site donated by Mrs. Walter Vogel, with Walter Vogel and Chris Pfaff doing much of the work; and the old Roman Catholic church had been brought from Taber and was being remodelled, with Hammond organ and bell installed later. Every year had seen an increase in the number of schoolrooms, teachers, and pupils, climaxed by the building of the new L. B. Thomson school. It was so called in honour of Dr. L. B. Thomson, of Regina, who was head of the P.F.R.A.

Late in December of 1952 Steve was sent to Chatham, N.B., for an instruction course with jet engines, in preparation for a term of service in Europe. Eileen and the children came home to stay with us till they should sail. Steve had one more trip back to Fort Nelson for routine posting to England, and on the way down by plane on January 15th during stormy weather they came near to being lost. They had orders to bale out over

the vast frozen regions north of Grand Prairie, but the worst was narrowly averted. Early in February they sailed from St. John, N.B., by the *Empress of France*.

After the New Year I was called to Edmonton to make plans for the work I would be engaged in during my last six months with the Department of Lands and Forests.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

RETIREMENT DAYS

AUGUST 19th was the day I was supposed to deliver the truck back to the Department in Edmonton, which I did. I had been so used to using it for all sorts of chores I felt I would miss it, and bought myself a good second-hand light delivery when I got back to Lethbridge. It should have been holiday time for me then, but I seemed to find all kinds of work to take up my time. When the Director of Lands called late in August I made arrangements to lease the headquarters' residence where I was living and some adjoining farmland which included my gardens for a ten-year period. The Department had no particular use for the house and buildings at this time as the Grazing Association provided living quarters for their men in the centre of the pasture.

I had already done a little insurance for the Wawanesa Company, with the prospect of doing more when I became my own boss, and this proved to be the case, as I worked closely with Archie in his Iron Springs and Picture Butte business until my own grew too large in a few months' time. However, George Brady and I took a job of fence-surveying and building that fall, which paid us well for the time spent. I donated more labour in finishing odd jobs about the church, and still had time to go pheasant shooting with the Gordon Bell party, and for prairie chickens in the foothills with Bill Porter. Meeting Gordon Bell, of Vancouver, was a pleasant surprise, especially when I found out quite by accident that his son was married to my first cousin, Nancy Warren.

I had a brand new experience one day in October when I had a phone call from Lethbridge before breakfast. It was the C.B.C. outdoors department who wanted to make an appoint-



ment to interview me on down-to-earth cowboy life as it was in my youth. The team made a tape recording, but I missed the programme when it went on the air. However, they had read it back to me when they made it. Eva had made several on

various subjects a year or so before, and was fortunate in hearing most of them when they were on.

I had a lot of work about the house that fall when I installed a floor furnace beneath the front rooms that had never been properly served by the coal furnace in the basement. I was also using fuel oil in the heater I had in my insurance office, a small one down on the Vauxhall Trading premises that Archie had bought from its former owner when he moved away. Bill Porter made me a beautiful hand-finished desk for the office and brought it out after Christmas. It was in January that my old friend, Roy Wright, of Picture Butte, passed away very suddenly from a blow on the head. A bachelor from Prince Edward Island who visited us fairly often in those days was Lloyd MacQuarrie, old-timer and homesteader of the Retlaw country. He had been a college classmate of Eva's brother, but for forty years had been a successful wheat farmer. Now he took a fancy to revisit the old one-room school at Cherry Creek where he had first taught on coming West. Mr. and Mrs. Howard Court, Lloyd, and ourselves drove down one week-end in June, setting out our lunch on the teacher's desk. The school had been deserted and was unlocked, but had been kept clean and used as a sort of meeting place. We spent the night in cabins at Elkwater Lake where Lloyd used wood in his range for the sake of being able to enjoy wood smoke again.

In May I had John Young pull my office up on my own premises where it would be conveniently near to the roads close by. After we had repainted the walls and ceilings of our down-stair rooms in pastel shades I was really pleased with the effect. Just after Senator Buchanan passed away we attended the opening of the big Travers Dam, where Hon. J. G. Gardiner was present. It was a very fine day and a huge crowd from all directions had come together. When I took on the job of part-time weed inspector for Vauxhall district, I found out the job was really a colossal one, and felt at the end of the season that I had accomplished very little. It was a full-time job for anybody.

I was taking quite a bit of hail insurance by this time, and I remember there were a lot of bad hail losses on August 3rd and 4th. But I was about through with hail and weeds when August 19th rolled around.

After celebrating a double birthday with a dinner at Lois' home in Lethbridge my wife and I set off for a holiday trip that lasted nearly one month. We carried our provisions and living quarters with us in a neat cabin that Bill had built to fit on the back of the International light delivery. Across the front was a full-length double bed, its mattress and blankets wrapped in a white canvas tarp. There was a wardrobe along one side with a long rod for coat-hangers. There was a built-in cupboard on the other side with shelves and partitions for dishes and food, and a door in front that could be lowered for a dining-table. The back door of the truck could be laid flat to provide a stand for the Coleman stove in bad weather when I did not want to use it in the open. A shining cream can for carrying good water, a couple of boxes for seats, a small mirror on the wall, and a gasoline lantern, pretty well made up the rest of the furniture. Oh yes, there was a length of linoleum on the floor, a small soft rug to stand on, and broom and dustpan. There were two small windows in the cabin with plastic curtains, and a ventilating system near the front.

We crossed the boundary at Carway and travelled through Logan Pass. The scenery was very clear till we reached the summit. After that we were totally surrounded by a thick fog until we were well down to Avalanche. We stayed there overnight and counted five bears walking around nonchalantly, or digging out garbage cans. One small one passed under our cabin as he rambled along, but we were both inside then. We spent several hours going through the palace under Hungry Horse Dam; we had never seen anything like it. We enjoyed the quiet beauty along the west side of Flathead Lake, stopping there for one meal. It was the "rainy hills of Idaho" as we travelled through Clarks Forks and Sand Point. At Chewelah we stopped for a short visit with Mr. and Mrs. "Hildy" who had moved there a few years before. We spent some time at the Grand Coulee Dam, and marvelled at the change brought to the country around Soap Lake and Ephrata by water since we passed that way in 1933. We went through Fort Lewis at the closing hour of 5 p.m., and found the traffic thick as in a great city.

We spent several days with my half-brother George and his

family in Olympia and my two half-sisters, Bessie and Lillian, and their families, in Shelton. My step-mother Rose we first saw in hospital, as she was recovering from a very serious operation. While we visited with these relatives they took us around on many of the scenic drives, and with my sister-in-law Joyce I climbed over two hundred steps to the top of the far-famed Capitol in Olympia, replica of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. We drove up the heavily-forested oyster-bed shores on the west side of Puget Sound to Port Angeles, where we took ferry across the foggy Juan de Fuca Strait to Victoria. After calling on some friends there and enjoying the beauties of the city and the Butchart Gardens we drove north to Nanaimo along the shore road. We had a perfect crossing, clear and calm, to Vancouver. By the next morning a dull steady rain had set in and it lasted all the time we tried to visit some old friends there. At New Westminster we called on some friends of my wife, and when we reached Agassiz we found we had picked the rainiest night of the year to visit my aunt's folks there. In the morning we crossed on the ferry to Rosedale, passed by Mount Cheam, and took the Hope-Princeton highway on the way to Penticton. We went up the lake to Paradise Ranch at Naramata where we visited my Aunt Florence for a day or two. Then back around the lake to visit my wife's folks at Summerland and Kelowna, also my cousin at Oyama. At Trail, where I had once worked for a time, my wife's cousin and family showed us around the city which had grown so fast. Its lights made a wonderful display at night as they reflected down the banks of the river. When we got back to Coleman we decided to try going up the Kananaskis Highway, but when we got to Longview we decided the road was more rough than scenic. So we cut through the oilfields and came out at High River. We decided to spend a couple more days visiting Eva's sisters and their families in Calgary and Olds (since we were on the road). We had another right rainy day for the last leg of our trip on September 17th through Cassils and Scandia to Vauxhall. But never a drop of rain had come through our cabin roof or walls.

Later in the fall Eva kept house for Lois while the Porter family went on a little vacation. But soon after, Shane came

down with a bad case of scarlet fever so the family did not get out of quarantine till Christmas. It proved a very trying and tiring time for Lois.

Between Christmas and New Year as many as possible of our family went to Calgary to celebrate Mother Matheson's ninetyeth birthday with her. She had gone to Calgary in October to spend the winter there, after spending the summer months with Archie, Lois, and ourselves. Visits, wires, and phone messages from various sons and daughters, along with gifts and flowers, made it a memorable day for her.

I was still giving Archie a few days from time to time with his insurance work, although my own was growing steadily. One fine day, the first of March, I drove over to Iron Springs, dropping Eva off down town where she was attending a W.I. (Women's Institute) meeting. I had intended to stay all night, but about 6 p.m. she phoned that I had better come home as she had broken her wrist. In walking home on a sidling road which was icy under a little fresh snow, she sat down suddenly with one hand bent under her. It was more than the wrist could stand, and I took her to the doctor in Lethbridge the next morning. She wore a cast for six weeks, but the break healed well without leaving any weakness.

Meanwhile Steve and Eileen and the children had been in Europe for two years, most of the time in North Luffenham, England, where the R.C.A.F. was stationed. They had bought an English car, a Zephyr, and were taking advantage of Steve's long leaves to see as much of that country, and Scotland as well, as possible. They had met some of the Warren relatives in or near London, and had heard about the Warren estate and other relatives mentioned on my copy of the "family tree". Now they decided it would be nice for them to go and see it. It was in Sussex, and they were lucky enough to take some good pictures of it, and to meet some of the old servants who could tell them of its wealth and distinction when the old Commander and his wife (a very regal lady) were alive. But now the place was going downhill, they said, with no one taking an interest in it. It had been willed to my uncle in Vancouver, who was not only old but an invalid. At the time they saw it the roof was in very bad condition, and it became a standing joke after-

wards that Steve should "get a few days off to fix the roof", and perhaps Bill Porter could go over and give him a hand. (This was strictly a family joke, of course)! Steve was now transferred to Zweibrucken in Germany for his third year overseas, with a few months at the last in Metz. In February of 1956 their three years in Europe was up and they landed in Halifax, bag and baggage, after a very rough trip across on the *Franconia*. Driving on highways tunnelled through deep snow most of the way they reached Vauxhall in a few days' time. Steve had now been promoted to sergeant and had been hoping for a western posting in Canada after his three years overseas. However, it did not work out that way, and he was posted to St. Hubert in Montreal. That meant starting back on that long trip all too soon. It was early March and the weather from the head of the lakes east was a series of blizzards. When they arrived in Montreal they found a complete tie-up of traffic and no one getting through to the airport for the past two days.

In 1956 Archie had attained his seniority with the Alberta Pacific Grain Company, having worked for them seventeen years with a record that was A.1. He decided to give all his time to his growing insurance business, and this freed me from the need of going over to help him in his Picture Butte office.

In the summer of 1956 we gave considerable thought to visiting Eileen and Steve in Montreal, as they had been so disappointed at not having a better visit with us after their three years in Europe. In July we went down by "Canadian" and spent a few weeks in the East. It was something new to me to have jet planes screaming overhead all day, and sometimes all night when I wanted to sleep. However, we got so that they did not bother us too much.

While Steve had his leave we drove down Boston way for a few days. My brother-in-law Wilfrid and his family lived at Marblehead. They had spent a couple of days with us in 1951. Now we were near enough to return the visit; as well as visit a cousin of Eva's, James Patterson, who with his wife was spending the summer at their island resort in Boothbay Harbour. This tiny island was called "Isle of Springs", a delightful spot that could be reached only by boat, and had no roads, only paths beneath the trees. The harbour was calm and sparkling

blue without even a ripple to toss the motor boat as we went around the island, meeting the odd lobster-boat, and watching holiday-makers aqua-planing. The Lake Champlain crossing which we took going east was of much scenic beauty.

When 1957 gave Steve three weeks' holiday, they headed for the west in their Plymouth Suburban. While they were all very much attached to their old English car, "Betsy", they felt it was too crowded for them to travel and sleep in on a summer vacation. The children felt particularly bad when Steve traded the old car in, and Roger, aged five, slipped back to tell the dealer to "be sure and be good to Betsy." Of course, the new station wagon was much better for the trip, and we were all enjoying their visit till one night, while Steve, Bill, and I were away in the mountains fishing, Mother Matheson took a very serious hæmorrhage in the night, and after Eva had made her comfortable she phoned for one of the girls to come out from Lethbridge with her until it was decided if she must go to the hospital. At that time Vauxhall had a doctor briefly, and in the afternoon he decided Eva should have the ambulance from Taber take her to hospital. Very much against her will, for she was sure the rough trip of over twenty-five miles would kill her mother in the condition she was, Eva phoned for the ambulance and Lois went along to try and keep her as comfortable as possible. This was the bad news that greeted us on our return. We went every day to see her in hospital, fully expecting it would be her last. But in two or three days she took a turn for the better, and at the end of the week Steve and I, with Eva along, were able to transfer her to Calgary General Hospital where she had a contract. She was unbelievably weak, but stood the trip well, as we had made a nice bed for her. In a few weeks she was able to leave hospital and go to stay with her daughter Alice.

Later in the summer the new provincial highway, No. 36, was built north from Taber. It cut through my flower gardens and shade trees. The crews worked twenty-four hours a day, and the dust and din of the huge machinery caused us great discomfort. There was no let-up night or day as they dredged and carried away the water-soaked soil around the irrigation ditch. There was no chance to sleep with that throbbing vibration

that never seemed to cease. If you have ever been in such a situation you will understand; if not, I cannot explain. But at the finish it was a fine road, wide and high.

For the second time potato-growing was becoming one of the foremost industries of Vauxhall, but on a greater scale than had been the case some years back, before the depression in price. Now several Japanese farmers, mostly men who had been brought in from the Pacific Coast some fifteen years before, were in the van of this branch of farming. They were using the best of modern machinery, had well-equipped root cellars, and putting out tubers to meet the most exacting markets.

Tage Birck was a key man in the matter of providing hospital service for residents in Vauxhall, as was Jake Klassen in getting the rural electrification association under way for the district. The present village council has been working hard towards getting in natural gas for fuel purposes, also for a larger supply of water for village uses. While the natural gas is to be piped in from Pincher Creek, it is interesting to note that as long as forty years ago such farmers as Walter McAndrews found natural gas right on their own farms and made some slight use of it. Now they will pay a big price to have it piped in from far away.

In the spring of 1958 Archie and Lois thought it would be a nice thing if we could go east to Prince Edward Island, while Steve and Eileen were in Montreal. I had never been there but had a great wish to go, and Eva had not been back since 1941. This time we took Donna Porter along with us. She had just finished her Grade 12 exams (later proved with success). I was freed of all worry about my insurance business when Archie and Lois agreed to keep open my office two or three days of the week as needed during summer holidays. We spent two very pleasant days at Toronto and Niagara Falls on our way east, changing trains at Sudbury for Toronto, then on leaving Toronto we followed the lakes. At certain towns we could see a lot of work being done on the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Jacques Cartier bridge was then in the process of being raised at a cost of many millions of dollars, but traffic was going over it all the time, though many were using the Victoria Bridge. Eva was the only one of us who had seen Niagara, and she said she

thought it wonderfully improved over the years in every way. When Steve got his leave we started for P.E.I. in his station wagon, with cabin trailer behind. There we lived, wherever we stopped along the way. A little crowded with seven of us in all, but so convenient for dressing, eating, and sleeping. We made Cavendish Beach our headquarters on P.E.I. We left our trailer there, visiting friends and relatives east and west during the day and coming back at night. Donna and I were most interested in seeing the big farmhouse where Eva had grown up and the farm itself; Eva was most interested in seeing and talking to old friends and relatives still living; Steve was most interested in seeing his old station at Mount Pleasant, now only a deserted site with broken windows in the one hangar still left. And we all loved the few hours we had to spend on the warm, clean sand of the beach. We passed through one trailer park that I will always remember—the most beautiful and best-equipped that I ever saw anywhere. It was at Oak Bay, a few miles from St. Stephen's, in New Brunswick.

We got back from our long, eventful trip a day or so before my seventieth birthday. By this time we were all in the mood for a restful dinner with simple birthday cake. We celebrated the milestone with Steve, Eileen, and the children, Cindy and Roger. In a few days Donna, Eva, and myself would be starting back west to more busy days of "retirement" ahead.



